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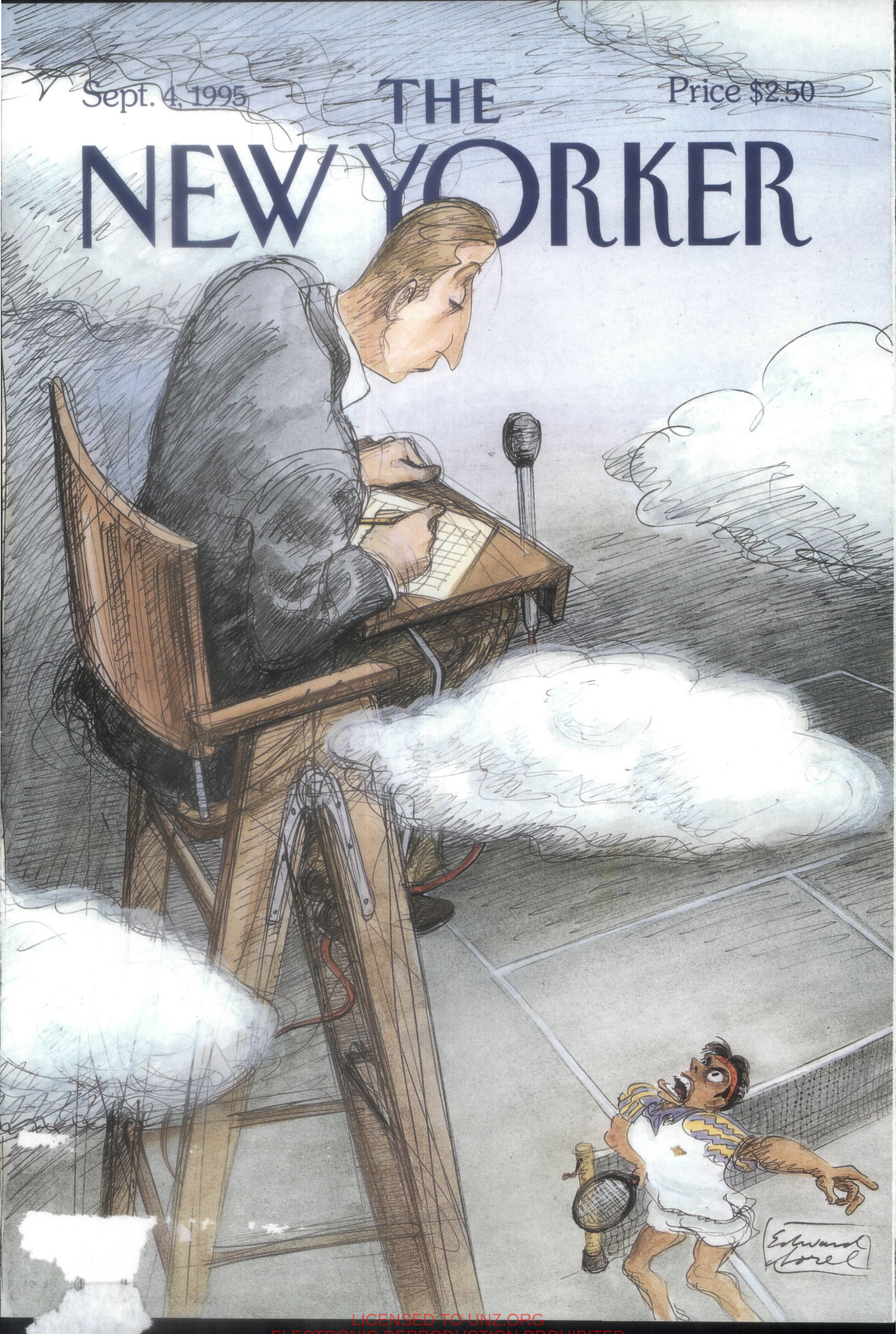
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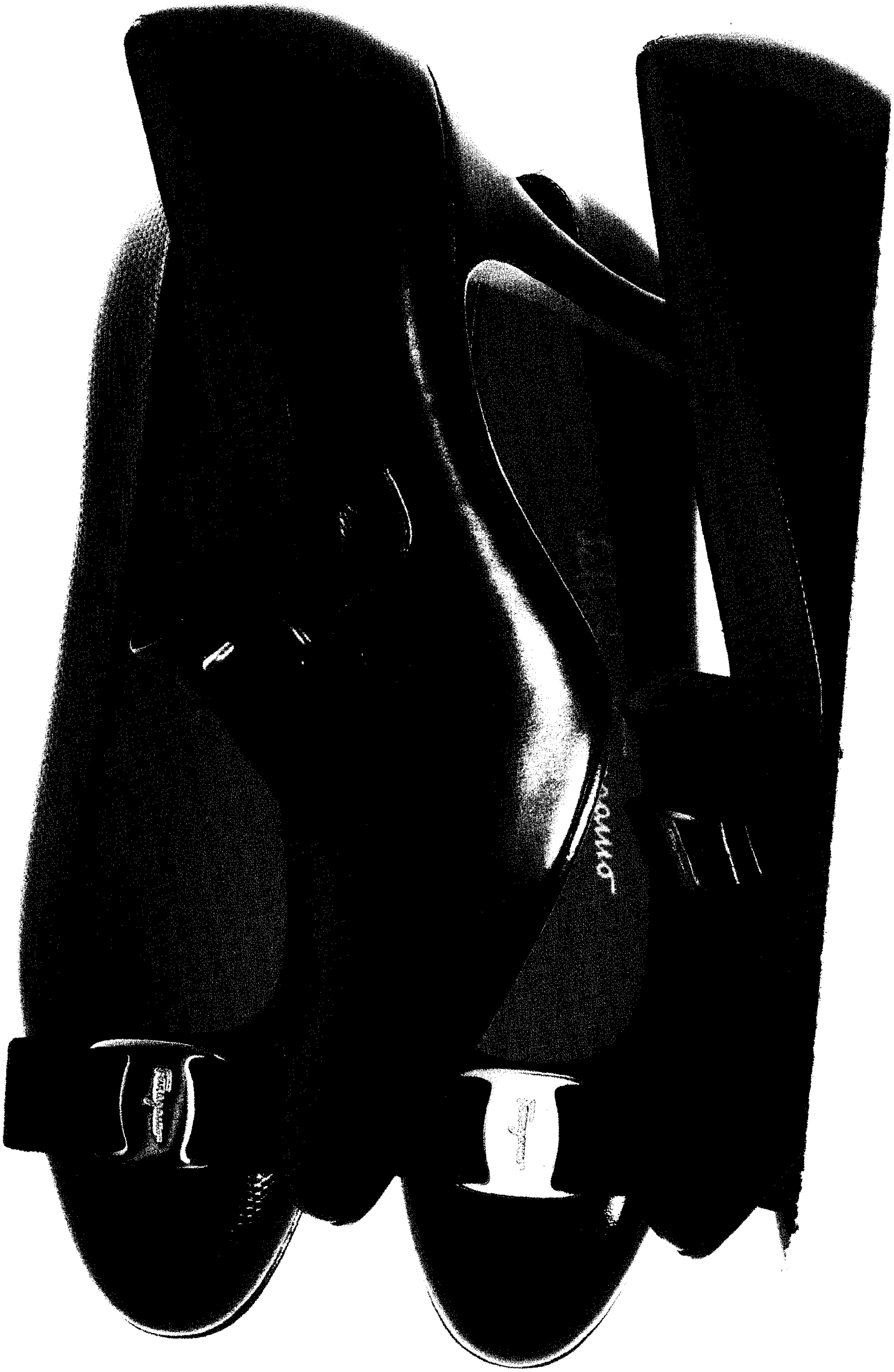

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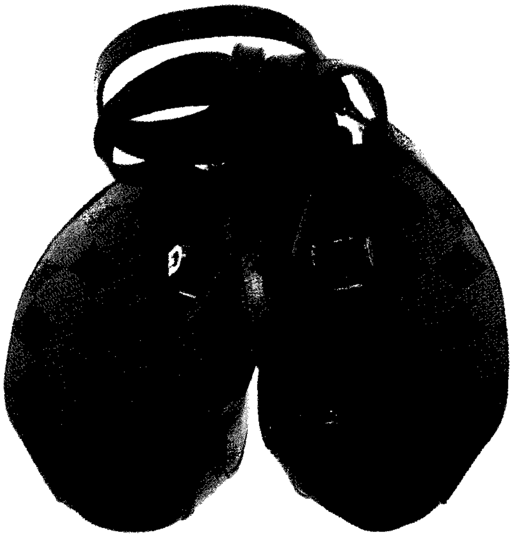

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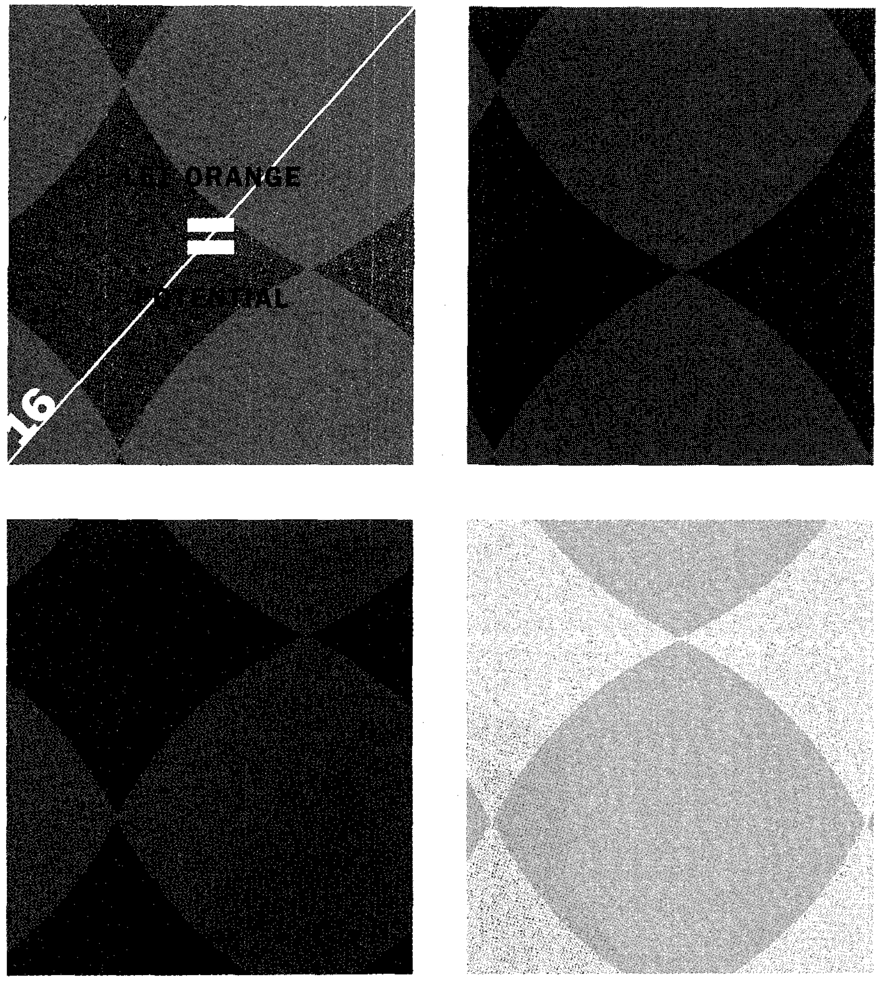

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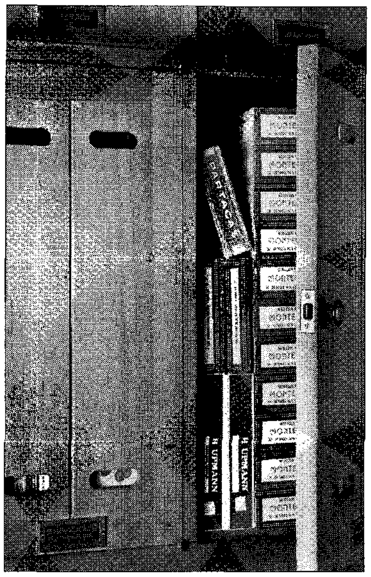

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for four combined issues: the last week of December and the first week of January, the last two weeks of February, the last week of June and the first week of July, and the last two weeks of August) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXI, No. 26, September 4, 1995. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $36.00; two years, $60.00. In Canada, one year, $77.00 (includes G.S.T.). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationle Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign, one year, $85.00, payable in advance.

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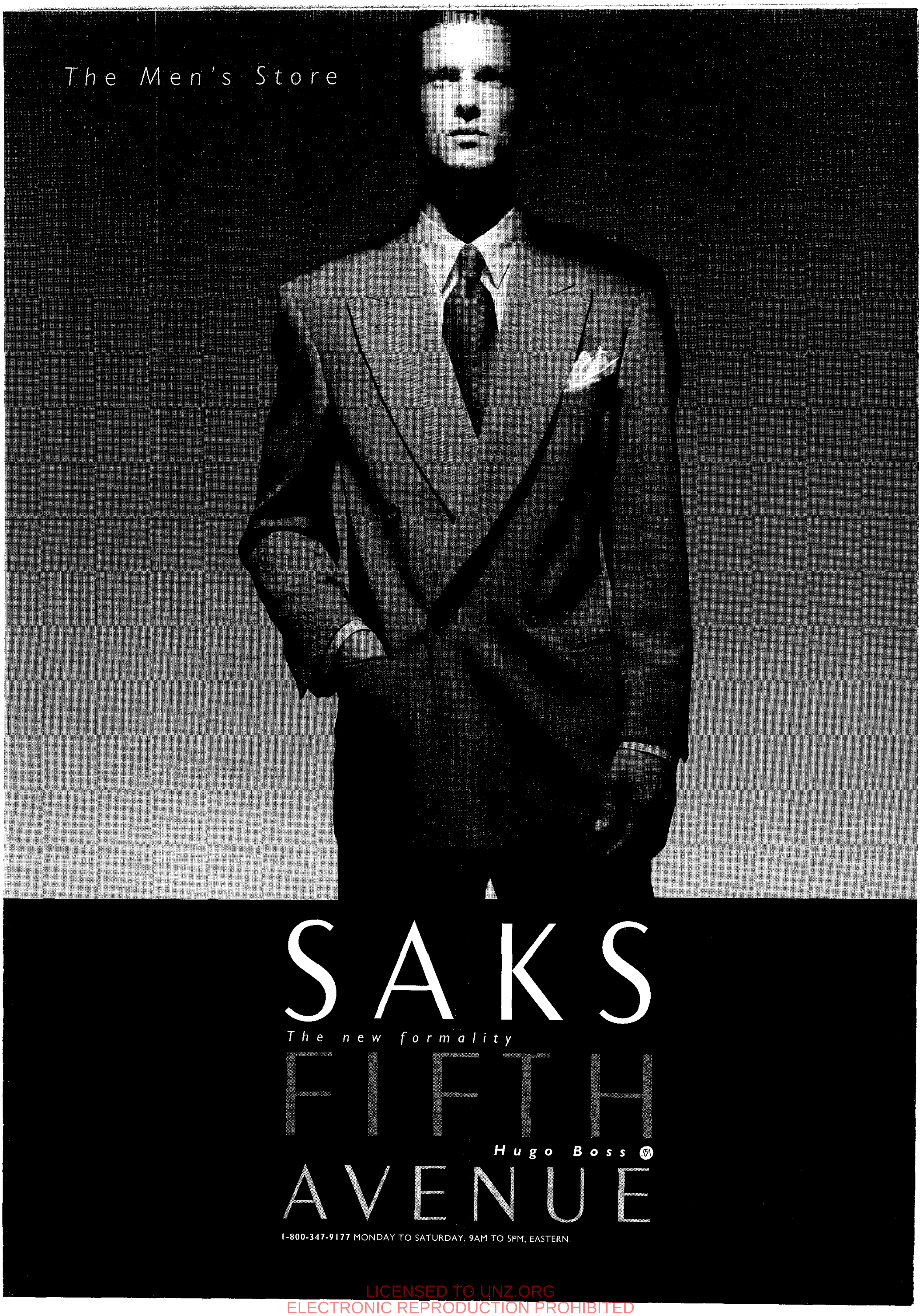

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COMMENT

THE INDEPENDENT ROUTE

Would a Powell–Bradley insurgency be good for America?

LIKE the first rustle of leaves signalling the stirring of a hurricane, intimations of an independent Presidential candidacy are beginning to make themselves felt. A couple of weeks ago, Bill Bradley, the chronically thoughtful New Jersey Democrat, announced that, while he will not run for reëlection to the Senate next year, he has "not ruled out" what he called "an independent route" to national office. A couple of weeks from now, Colin Powell, the retired general, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and former National Security Adviser, will tour the country to promote his autobiography, suggestively entitled "My American Journey"; an almost certain consequence of his road trip will be an enormous wave of interest in, and perhaps enthusiasm for, an independent Powell for President campaign. There are lesser rustles, too. Ross Perot, the Dallas eccentric, is fresh from the mock convention of his mock-populist organization, United We Stand America, and, while Perot isn't getting any fresher, he isn't getting any poorer, either. Jesse Jackson is doing his quadrennial throat-clearing, and Lowell Weicker, a maverick ex-Republican who has actually been elected to something as an independent (the governorship of Connecticut, in 1990), is making similar noises.

Some of these putative candidacies have the capacity for mischief, and no more. Jackson would damage the Democrats, Perot would damage the Republicans, and Weicker would be a nuisance to both; and it's safe to say that none of the three could win. Senator Bradley is a far more credible figure. Still, his well-established views on public questions are so nearly identical to the President's that it is difficult to imagine him forging, on his own, a convincing rationale for attempting the destruction of his ideological twin. General Powell is quite another story. Personable, wildly popular across the political spectrum, charismatic, and experienced in governance, if not in electoral politics, Powell is a national hero by virtue of his role in the only shooting war the United States has unambiguously won since 1945. His race, which has never been the focus of his leadership, would probably be a political advantage: it would attract black voters and reassure liberals, and the prejudice it would normally excite elsewhere is largely trumped by his military experience

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and his background as a high official in Republican Administrations. Besides, it would make him ipso facto the symbol of a decisive break with the past. Powell is potentially the most formidable non-major-party candidate of the century; and he would be even stronger paired with Bradley as his running mate.

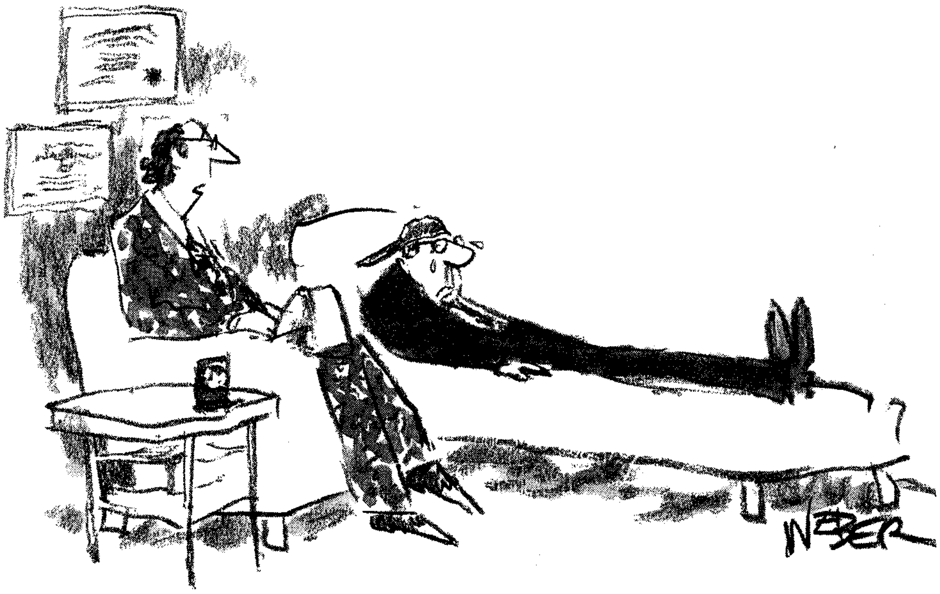
Could such a ticket win? There is every reason to think so. In 1992, an independent candidate, Perot, won nineteen per cent of the popular vote—and that was after Perot had spectacularly proved his unfitness by abandoning his campaign and his supporters on the ground that someone had threatened to disrupt his daughter's wedding. (If the tale was false, it revealed Perot as a delusionist and a phantast; if it was true, it revealed him as a poltroon, prepared to knuckle under to a comically mild form of terrorism.) Without that episode, Perot might have got a third of the vote. And, on top of the factors that gave rise to Perot, consider the real choice the electorate will face next year, if that choice is limited to the Democratic and Republican nominees. There is essentially no chance that the Democrats can regain control of either house of Congress; on the contrary, there are almost certain to be further Republican gains, though probably not so many as to yield a veto-proof supermajority. The choice at the Presidential level, therefore, would not really be between the world according to Clinton and the world according to (say) Bob Dole. To reëlect Clinton, who could act as a check on the Republican Congress but couldn't win its approval of any initiatives of his own, would be to opt for a version of the status quo: divided government, increased gridlock, mild but still painful retrenchment. To elect a Republican President, on the other hand, would be to insure the enactment of the entire Gingrichian agenda: a shifting of the tax burden downward; a chipping away at reproductive rights; the phasing out of environmental protection; a steady increase in class and regional inequalities; huge cuts in education and health programs; and a generation-long activist conservative lock on the Supreme Court. No wonder people yearn for something else.

Even so, an independent ticket predicated on nothing more than the personal and moral qualities of its candidates would be worse than none, because it would reinforce the dangerous myth that our national woes can be traced to the personal and moral failings of our national leaders. An independent ticket devoted to explicating endless and dutiful "stands" on "the issues"—one that put out lots of position papers splitting the difference between Clinton and the Republicans on topics like deficit reduction and welfare reform—would be better. Not much better, though, because what ails the country is not really a shortage of policy solutions; rather, it is the structural inability of our three-headed government—House, Senate, Presidency—to settle on a coherent policy program, carry it out, and then, after a decent interval, be judged on its success or failure. However, an independent ticket that ran on a program of political reform—that made fixing the institutions something close to its single issue—would be worth the trouble, win or lose. "We live in a time when on a basic level politics is broken," Bradley said in his speech announcing his departure from the Senate. He's right. The pervasive public hunger for an independent Presidential candidacy is a symptom of profound systemic crisis. Our political institutions are not working. A Powell-Bradley insurgency animated by that understanding and seeking a mandate to do something about it might actually be able to open out the public's sadly diminished sense of possibility.

There is a radical approach to political reform and a moderate one. The radical approach would put the whole governmental mechanism up on blocks, and would be willing to entertain all sorts of deep structural changes, from unitary government (the practice in every democratic country except the United States, a few third-world republics, some members of the former Soviet Union, and, arguably, France) to proportional representation (which is universal in industrial democracies except for Britain and France and a handful of former British colonies, such as the United States and India). The moderate approach would overhaul the rules but not the structures: it would focus on such measures as reform of the financing of campaigning and lobbying and regulation (or abolition) of paid political spot advertising, and perhaps on such tinkerings as term limits for legislators, a single six-year Presidential term, or longer intervals between House elections.

But one has to be clear about what an independent President and Vice-President, elected without ties to the congressional parties, would mean. It would be a kind of soft coup d'état—a species of Bonapartism with a gentle, democratic face. To succeed in office, the independent President would have to govern essentially by decree; that is, Congress would have to be so overawed by the fact of his victory that it would simply go along with his program. The idea of a President invested with much more political legitimacy than Congress, a President who embodies the General Will of the people, is very far from what the framers of the Constitution had in mind. This doesn't mean that it would necessarily be a bad thing; but it would be a scary thing. The only thing scarier might be the alternatives, and they offer very little hope.

—HENDRIK HERTZBERG



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IN THE MAIL

HIROSHIMA

As a 5th Marine Division veteran of the landing on Iwo Jima, I read with great interest Murray Sayle's Letter from Hiroshima (July 31st). In July and August of 1945, my platoon was training to land in the first wave of an all-out assault on Sasebo, Japan, planned for the autumn. So it might be said that we had a personal stake in wanting to see the war end. When they told us at roll call one morning that a Japanese city had been vaporized by a new type of bomb, we were exultant. Then a second one, ditto.

To me, Sayle's piece is an overnuanced whitewash of the role of the Japanese in the Second World War and a corresponding blanket condemnation of our use of the atomic bomb against them. There is no denying that the Japanese planned and carried out a devastating surprise attack on Pearl Harbor (causing twenty-four hundred deaths); demonstrated an abominable and long-standing disregard for human rights in China, Manchuria, the Philippines, and any other territory they occupied; were legendarily cruel to their prisoners of war, in direct violation of international protocols; fought with suicidal savagery; and were themselves attempting to develop an atomic bomb, which they would not have hesitated to use against us. War is hell and ought to be done away with, but I, for one, am glad we got there first this time.

GERALD KAMBER
Loch Arbour, N.J.

Mr. Sayle concludes that so many things were going against Japan that it is impossible to identify the critical factor and say whether or not it was the bomb that ended the war. In this way, he perpetuates the notion that we probably did not have to use it and, by implication, that those who decided to use it did an awful thing. I think it is wrong to search for a single cause for the war's end. What we knew very clearly in 1945, and forgot in Vietnam and still have not relearned in Bosnia, is that a measured response will never stop a determined aggressor. The only way to end a war is to hit an enemy with such overwhelming force that he has no hope of gaining a victory.

It was the total picture—the Russian entry into the war, the firebombing of Tokyo, the fact that the largest fleet the world had ever seen was sailing at will in Japan's waters, and, certainly, the atomic bomb—that forced Japan to surrender. No one knows what would have happened in the absence of any one of those factors. To use such speculation to criticize those who brought an end to the Second World War is a gross injustice.

EDWARD J. SACK
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Murray Sayle eloquently describes the events that led to the surrender of Japan. But in his quest for "a cause-and-effect sequence fully capable of forcing the decision, without the bombs," he quotes only the paragraph of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey report that supports his thesis: that surrender would have been forced by November 1st, because continued firebombing would have exacted a toll far in excess of that exacted by the atomic bombings. Sayle failed to quote the conclusion of the report: "It is apparent that in the atomic bomb the Japanese found the opportunity which they had been seeking, to break the existing deadlock within the Government over acceptance of the Potsdam terms." Surely that was the actual "cause and effect" that Sayle was seeking.

ARNOLD KRAMISH
Reston, Va.

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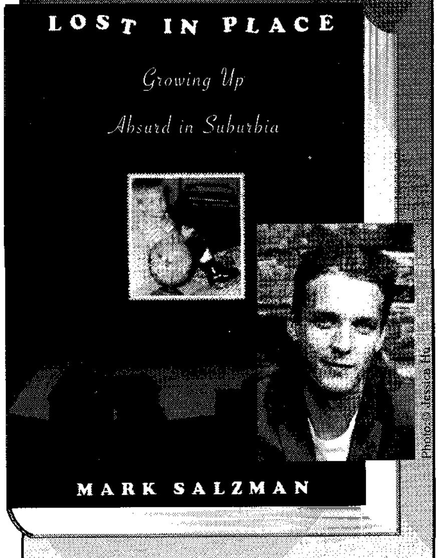

RANDOM HOUSE

sands like me have never looked back. On August 6, 1945, I was sitting on the black volcanic sands of Iwo Jima, wearily waiting for the expected invasion of the Japanese mainland. We had been told that we could expect a million casualties when the invasion began, about November 1st. Then the bomb was dropped and the war ended. Just like that. I was part of the 15th Fighter Group, Seventh Fighter Command, which had been attacked in Oahu on December 7, 1941, and whose lives were saved by the Hiroshima attack almost four years later. At least, that was the way we saw it that day; other scenarios were possible, but not certain. How many lives would the revisionists gamble with to rewrite history? Particularly if it were their own lives at stake? It is a consolation to read in Hendrik Hertzberg's Comment ("The Nuclear Jubilee," July 31st) that the bomb then might have stilled a bomb now.

ARTHUR I. FRANKEL
Binghamton, N.Y.

I was startled to discover an excerpt from John Hersey's forty-nine-year-old "Hiroshima" in your July 31st issue. The last time I read this eloquent report (in its entirety, in September, 1946), it prompted me to do two things. First, I removed a small metallic "A-Bomb/Manhattan Project" pin from my coat lapel; I had been wearing the pin ever since it arrived in the mail from Washington, six or seven months earlier. I also removed from my office wall a framed certificate from the War Department, dated August 6, 1945, and signed by Henry L. Stimson, which confirmed my participation in "work essential to the production of the Atomic Bomb, thereby contributing to the successful conclusion of World War II."

Today, after I reread Hersey's work and read Murray Sayle's "Letter from Hiroshima," I recalled a question I had asked my Manhattan Project supervisor a half century ago: "Why Hiroshima, with all those women and children?" The only answer I received: "Because it was one of the few Japanese cities where American prisoners were not being held."

As you might suspect, the entire subject still disturbs me. But not as profoundly as today's worldwide violence disturbs me.

ARTHUR BROOKS
New York City

It does not minimize the horror of Hiroshima to realize—as Murray Sayle's superb article helps us to do—that an even more horrible demon was unleashed when we as a species and as a nation became comfortable with targeting noncombatants. It does not diminish our recognition of the suffering experienced fifty years ago to remember that just twenty-seven years ago Westmoreland's policy of attrition led to the gunning down of five hundred and four people in a ditch at My Lai by fairly ordinary American soldiers, or that L.B.J.'s (and then Nixon's) policy of carpet bombing killed well over a million Vietnamese villagers.

The inevitable debates about the decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima should not blind us to how wildly our moral compass has swung, in this century and in this nation, from its former bearings. The Second World War was a war we had to fight. But decisions like those in Hiroshima, like those in Hamburg and Dresden, and like those in Vietnam should ever serve to remind us to elect with caution those who lead us, to follow their leadership with even more caution, and, finally, once they do some dire deed, to accept their explanations only with profound skepticism.

The moral paralysis America has shown recently regarding Bosnia is often explained, and even applauded, as an unwillingness to get bogged down in yet another quagmire. The political and ethnic situation there is mind-numbingly complex, but it is perfectly clear that civilians are being targeted in areas that the world community has designated safe havens. Perhaps our paralysis is also due to our continuing failure to accept the burden of responsibility for the mistake of targeting civilians as an ordinary part of our own military strategies from the Second World War to the present. Yet it is only by shouldering this burden that America can begin to regain its internal moral compass.

RANDY FERTEL
New Orleans, La.

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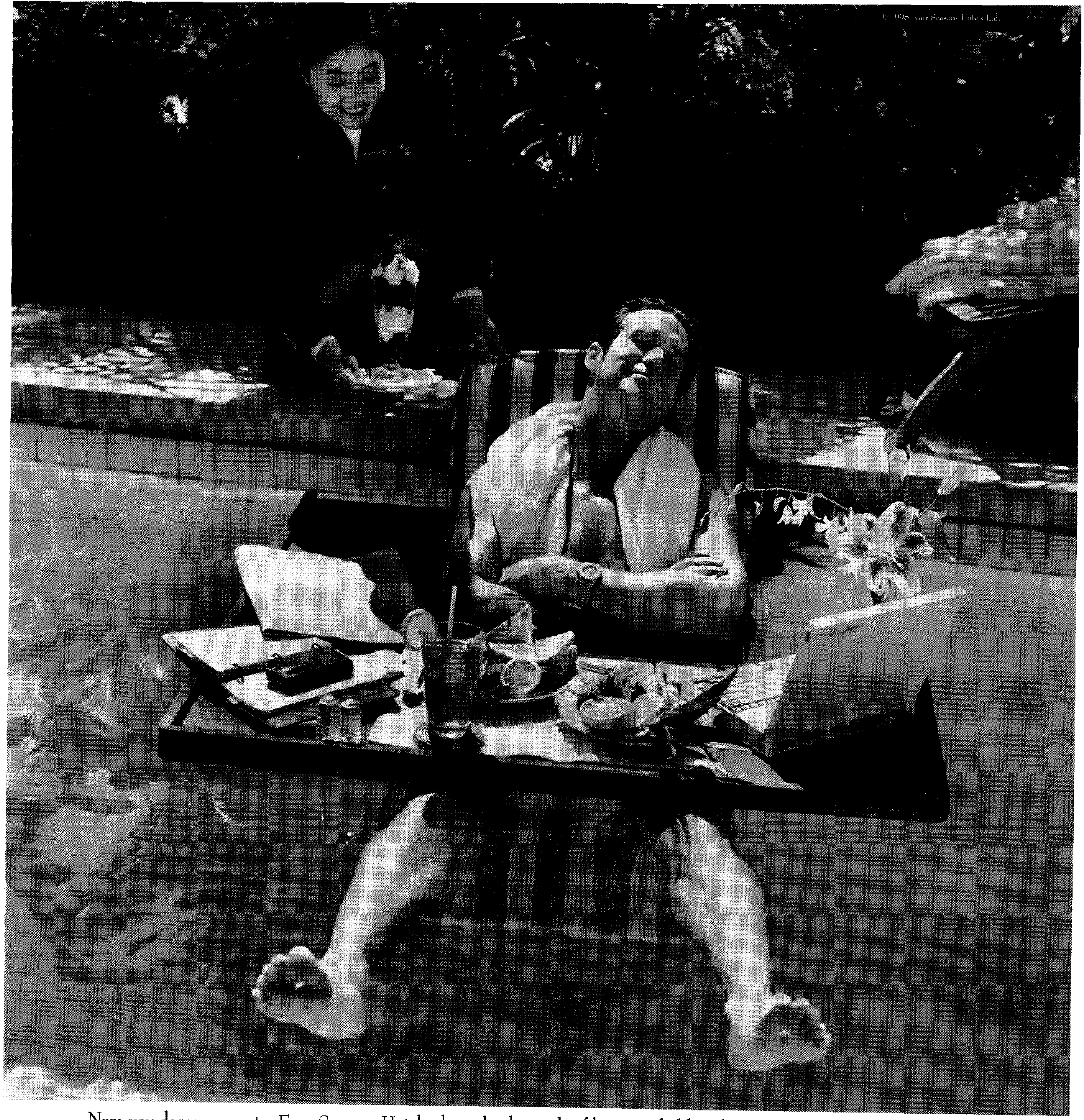

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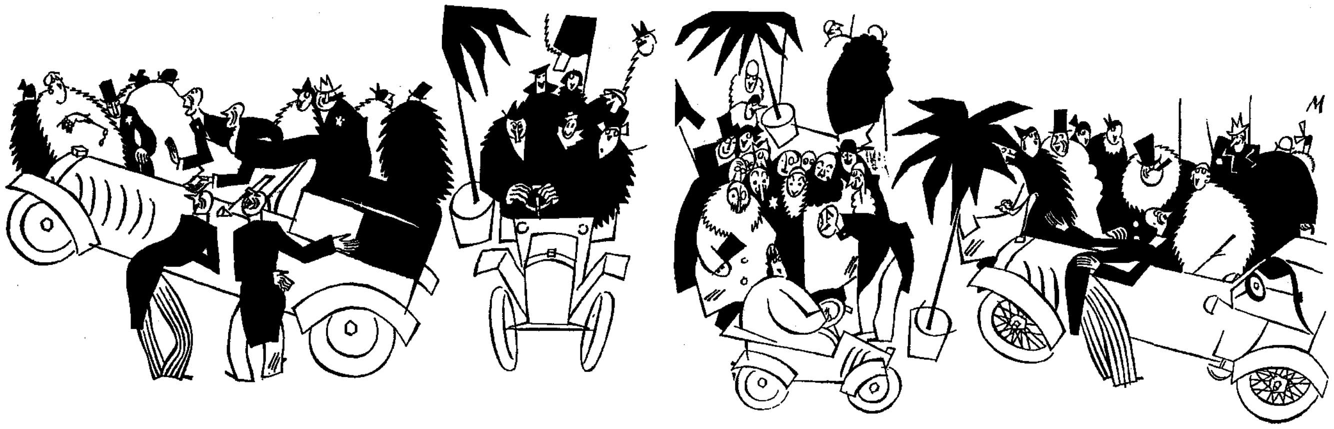

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Company—The Roundabout Theatre Company opens its thirtieth-anniversary season with a revival of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's 1970 musical about marriage. The cast includes Boyd Gaines, Debra Monk, Charlotte d'Amboise, and Kate Burton. Directed by Scott Ellis and choreographed by Rob Marshall. In previews. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

A Doll's House—The Pearl Theatre Company's production of Ibsen's classic, directed by Grey Johnson. Previews begin Sept. 5. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

A Dream Play—Paul Todaro directs the Independent Theatre Company's staging of Strindberg's 1901 play. Opens Aug. 30 at 8. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

Floating Rhoda and the Glue Man—Dylan McDermott and Myriam Cyr have the leading roles in this production of Eve Ensler's new comedy, about the sexual adventures of young couples. Directed by Ariel Orr Jordan. Previews begin Sept. 5. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Waiting for Godot—Beckett's play, presented by the Jean Cocteau Repertory, under the direction of Eve Adamson. In previews through Aug. 31. Opens Sept. 1 at 8. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

OPENED RECENTLY

After-Play—Anne Meara's comedy, about two couples who get together for an after-theatre dinner, stars Ms. Meara, Barbara Barrie, Larry Keith, and Merwin Goldsmith. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/13/95.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

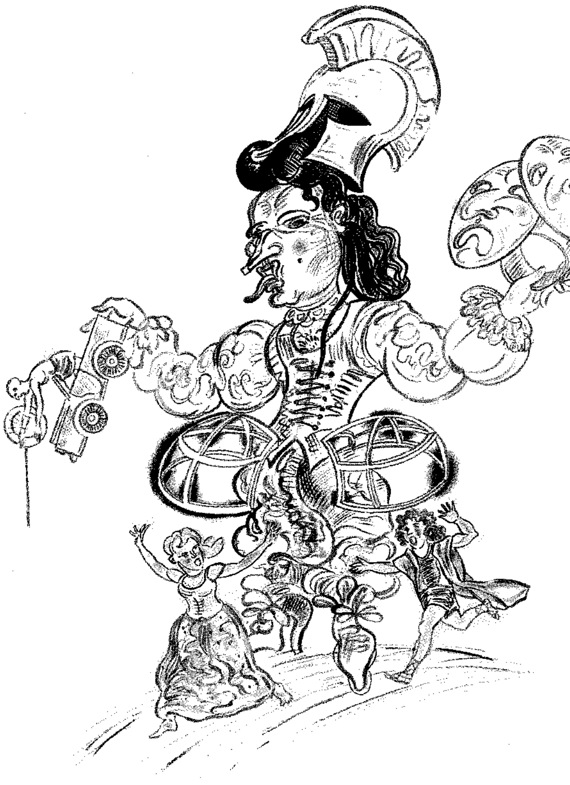
Cute Boys in Their Underpants—A return engagement of Robert Coles's comedy, set during rehearsals for a junky gay play of the same title. (Sanford Meisner, 164 Eleventh Ave., at 22nd St. 206-1764. Closes Sept. 17.)

Death Defying Acts—Three subpar one-act comedies, by David Mamet, Elaine May, and Woody Allen, that have the words "Written to Order" stamped all over them. (3/20/95) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Ecstasy—Mike Leigh's play takes place in a dismal North London flat in the winter of 1979. The late-seventies costumes and set are depressingly perfect, and the actors bring the six working-class characters to life with great specificity and vitality. (Smokeophobes take note: the theatre is small, and there's a whole lotta smokin' goin' on.) (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Food Chain—In this comedy by Nicky Silver, a call to a crisis hot line initiates a series of chases—wife after husband, mother after son, son after the object of his affection. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf—Ntozake Shange directed this twentieth-anniversary production of her consciousness-raising play about black womanhood in America, a work that features seven women telling stories about hope, anger, and love in the face of pain, and incorporates prose, poetry, and dance. It's still so fresh that after two decades it seems like it was written yesterday. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510.)



"Troilus and Cressida," in Central Park.

PIFR CONSAGRA

Having Our Say—Sadie and Bessie Delany, two sisters who have passed the hundred-year mark, presented their vivid life stories in a 1993 best-seller; the book has been adapted beautifully from the page to the stage by Emily Mann, who also directed. Gloria Foster and Mary Alice are brilliant as the sisters, who, taught by their family to "reach high" despite the dogging of Jim Crow, became a teacher and a dentist. The show is both a portrait of a remarkable relationship and an unsentimental depiction of service, accomplishment, and pride. (4/24/95) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Heiress—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 adaptation of Henry James's "Washington Square," directed by Gerald Gutierrez. Cherry Jones, who plays the title character, is exquisitely—almost unbearably—vulnerable. And the wonderful Frances Sternhagen is touching and funny as a widowed aunt. (3/20/95) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

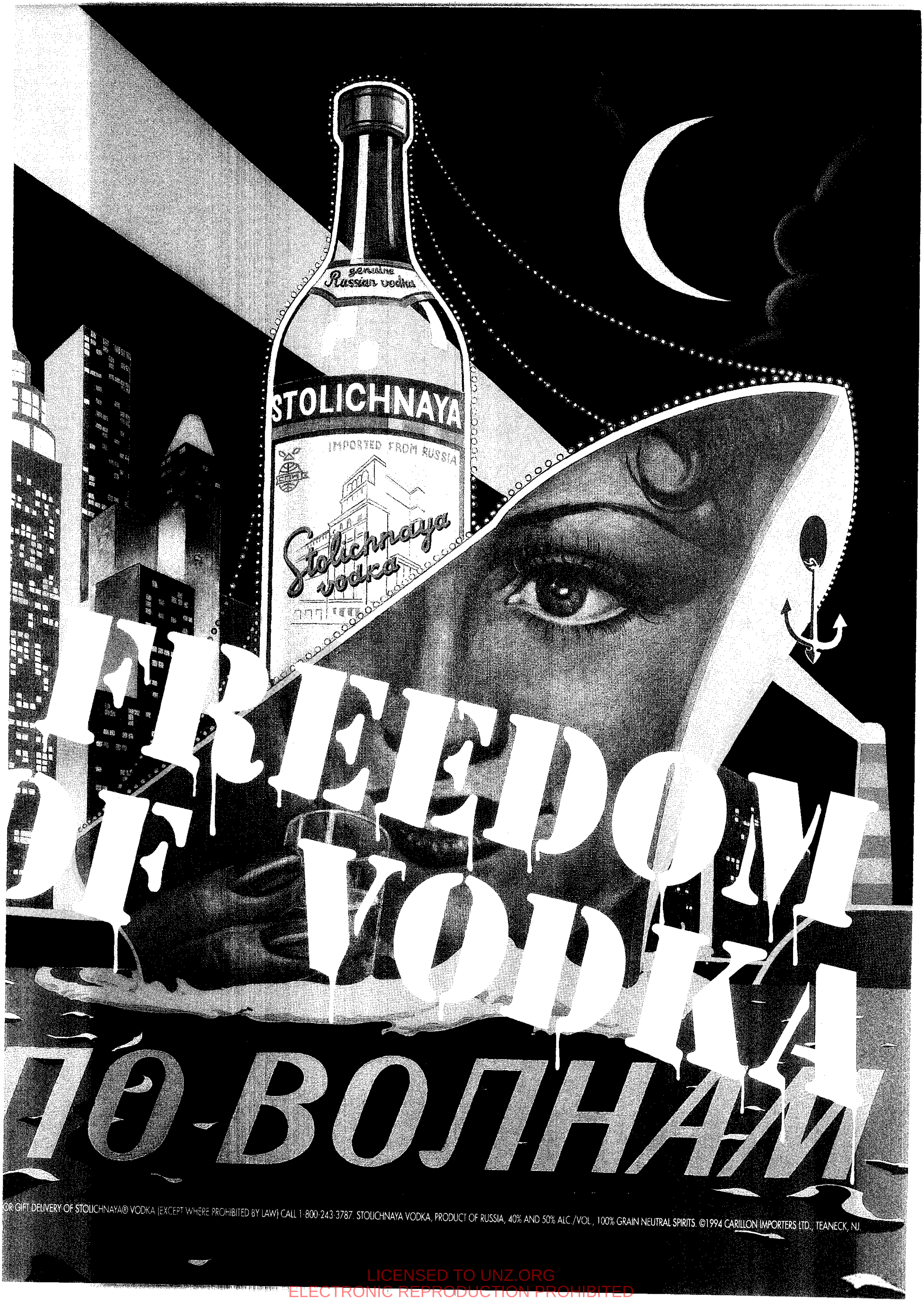
How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying—In this revival of Frank Loesser's 1961 musical, Matthew Broderick has polish and timing, but it's Lillias White's gospel solo in "Brotherhood of Man" that lifts the audience into a zone of joy. As a paradigm for the Broadway musical's con game—winning the public's heart while picking its pocket—her display of guile made glorious is as good as it gets. (4/24/95) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Indiscretions—This production of Jean Cocteau's "Les Parents Terribles," a dark comedy about the perversities of desire in family life, is marred by heavy-handedness and an unsatisfying central performance: Kathleen Turner, playing a hysterically possessive mother, is an unfocussed sprawl with a distractingly unplaceable accent. Roger Rees, Cynthia Nixon, and Jude Law also star, under the direction of Sean Mathias. (5/15/95) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

John & Jen—Andrew Lippa and Tom Greenwald's musical, which spans a forty-year period starting in 1951, explores problems of love and family through the relationships of a sister and a brother and, later on, of the sister and her son. The book is often hackneyed and the music repetitive, though the lyrics possess an honest charm. Well staged by Gabriel Barre. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

London Suite—Neil Simon knows how to cater to his audience, but he's serving leftovers: these four one-acts are *painfully* dated in both their substance and their execution. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 3.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Gorilla Repertory Theatre's annual free outdoor production in Washington Square Park, directed by Christopher Carter Sanderson, runs through Sept. 24. (For more information, call 330-8086.)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The Only Thing Worse You Could Have Told Me . . .—Greg Louganis has taken over for Dan Butler in Mr. Butler's one-man show, a procession of characters from the real world of contemporary gay culture, which is by turns funny, infuriating, sad, and uplifting. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 307-4100.)

Party—In David Dillon's comedy, seven gay men get together to play a strip version of truth or dare, with terrifically funny (if occasionally didactic) results. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Pets!—Helen Butleroff, together with seventeen writers, composers, and lyricists and five engaging actors, has created the perfect theatrical beach novel, about people and their pets. The evening has its slow bits, but its charm and silliness consistently win out. How can you lose with a show in which a lovelorn iguana sings a tango? (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 307-4100.)

Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman—A hundred-minute standup routine. Some of Becker's examples of discontent between the sexes are very funny (a lot of vigorous nodding goes on in the theatre—never by men and women at the same time), but a fair number of them are shopworn. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—A feast of early rock and roll, performed by a cast with Grade A lungs and legs. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Swingtime Canteen—A re-creation of a 1944 U.S.O. concert, performed in a night club. Extraneous bits of plot threaten to derail the show, but the lovely songs, done with verve and charm, carry the day. Charles Busch, who recently donned drag again to join the cast, leaves the show on Sept. 3. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Sylvia—In A. R. Gurney's new comedy, Sarah Jessica Parker, as a dog named Sylvia, brings meaning to the life of a middle-aged currency trader (John Cunningham) while driving a canine-shaped wedge between him and his wife (Mariette Hartley). Parker has some funny moments, but this upper-middle-class fairy tale settles too soon into a monotonous sweetness; it lacks bite. John Tillinger directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Time and the Wind—Romance in the metropolis is the theme of Galt MacDermot's sweep through the love lives of three couples. The evening offers some thirty numbers, in styles ranging from gospel to jazz to Broadway, but a desperately upbeat score and some embarrassingly strained rhymes (better half/fatted calf) rein in the heart's propensity to leap, and turn what should be something passionate into something ordinary. Lyrics by Norman Matlock; choreography and direction by Louis Johnson. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind—The Neo-Futurists, a troupe from Chicago, perform thirty original two-minute plays in one hour. They change the program each night, and when there's a full house they order a pizza. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 330-8087. Thursdays through Saturdays at 11 P.M.)

Travels with My Aunt—Giles Havergal, directing his own witty adaptation of Graham Greene's novel, has captured the book's amusingly puzzled tone with his playful, inventive (though overlong) staging. Four wildly different actors all play Henry Pulling, the staid retired banker whose eccentric Aunt Augusta drags him into her international adventures; one doubles as Aunt Augusta, and the other three skillfully handle some twenty additional parts. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Troilus and Cressida—After "The Tempest," a disappointing calm in Central Park. Director Mark Wing-Davey has saturated an already unwieldy play with cross-cultural references and anachronisms (Cassandra channelling with the aid of a vacuum cleaner, Hector knocked off by a cartoonish squad of S & M Myrmidons). The combatants and camp followers on the overstylized Trojan battleground are too distracted by spectacular but irrelevant details to ever seriously consider this business about a woman named Helen. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 861-7277. Closes Sept. 3.)

2 Boys in a Bed on a Cold Winter's Night—James Edwin Parker's comic tale is about how not to behave during a one-night stand, but it's also a sharp-eyed exploration of emotional intimacy. Robert Gomes and Michael Curry make the grown-up boys sympathetic without being mushy. Directed by Thomas Caruso. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 279-4200.)

What You Said—The improv company Chicago City Limits presents a brand-new revue, featuring its ever-popular five-minute musical. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP / TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION!:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 17. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

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DANCE

Joe Chvala and the Flying Foot Forum—The six-person troupe (accompanied by a four-man combo) works variations on flamenco, zapatillada (a Mexican soft shoe), jazz, tap, and martial arts into a program of five percussive dances, including "A Cappella," "A Hundred Dead Dollars," "Berserks," and "All Creatures Now Are Merry-Minded." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at 8.)

Pilar Rioja—In her twenty-third New York season, the dancer performs solo in a range of traditional Spanish styles; expect canes, fans, footwork, skirt work, snapping fingers, and castanets. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. Aug. 31, Sept. 1-2, and Sept. 5, all at 8, and Sept. 3 at 3. Through Sept. 17.)

Movement Research Open Performance—The downtown dance tank plays an away date, the first engagement in an ongoing studio series (now through January on the first Tuesday of the month) showcasing works in progress by Sonja Theresa Romeis, Vicente Silva, Sondra Loring, Pedro Alejandro, and Christine Coppola. After the evening's performances, choreographer John Jasperse will moderate an audience discussion. (Judson Church, 55 Washington Square S. Sept. 5 at 7:30. Admission by contribution.)

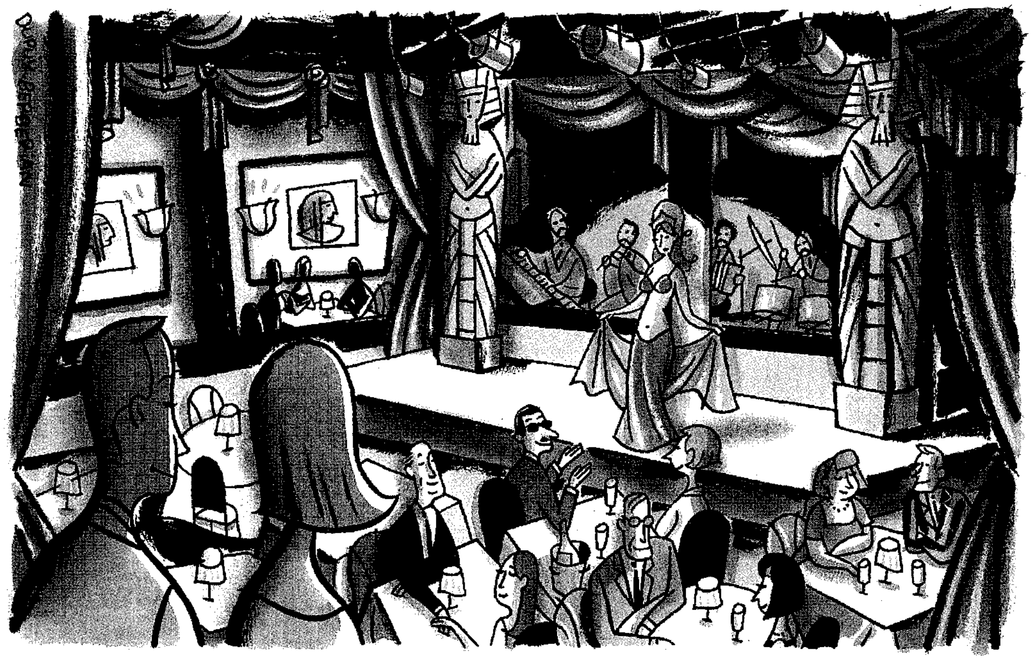
"On Fire"—The seven-member Dance Aura company appears in four works by the Taiwanese choreographer Ching-Wen Yeh, including "Personal Mission," "Jessica and Sue," "The Rite of Spring," and "Cyberspace." (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. Aug. 31-Sept. 1 at 5:30. For information about tickets, call 1-718 855-6033.)

NIGHT LIFE

Twist and Shout

The Ibis Supper Club (327 West 44th Street) may be New York's only belly-dancing dinner theatre. Every evening except Monday, the club—a vast turquoise-and-gold oasis that looks something like a cross between the Playboy Mansion and the Egyptian wing at the Metropolitan Museum—presents five belly dancers from five countries: Morocco, Lebanon, Israel, Greece, and the United States. According to Samiha D'Aiuto, Ibis's matriarchal owner, their undulations re-create an ancient ritual that has been used to, among other things, soothe sultans, exorcise demons, and prepare women for childbirth. The dancers perform, solo and in groups, to a live band, and then make way for the high point of the evening: Ibis's authentic Egyptian whirling dervish. Sayed Abdelrahman smiles, sets his jaw, and then proceeds to spin and spin and spin with such nausea-inducing abandon that you expect him to drill right through the dance floor. Ibis also serves delicious Middle Eastern food, but it's best to eat after the show.

DUPUY-BERBERIAN



Showtime at the Ibis Supper Club.

CONCERTS

Blues Festival—Featuring B. B. King, Jimmie Vaughn, Etta James, and Elvin Bishop. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Aug. 30 at 7.)

Soul Asylum / Matthew Sweet / Victoria Williams / Jayhawks—It took Soul Asylum nearly ten years to break, but the success of the Minneapolis rockers' 1992 album, "Grave Dancer's Union," hasn't kept them from falling out of favor just as quickly as younger one-hit wonders like Smashing Pumpkins. Their belated follow-up, "Let Your Dim Light Shine," lives up to its unfortunate name: it sounds as if they don't know why they made it any more than we do. Also on the bill are three other veteran acts that were alternative when alternative wasn't cool: power-pop poster boy Sweet, fanciful singer Williams, and those janglу roots-rockers the Jayhawks. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Aug. 30 at 8.)

Ted Nugent / Bad Company—The notorious bow-and-arrow hunter joins one of the better seventies-era rock-and-roll bands. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. Aug. 30 at 8.)

Jon Spencer Blues Explosion—It's hard not to love a record that begins with someone shrieking "Bell-bottoms!" and that's what happens on "Orange," the most recent CD from this savage New York trio. The Explosion devotes a great deal of time and energy to the enduring mysteries of the blues, injecting the idiom with ragged nineties-style references: tin-can drums, a string section, and, here and there, a blast of head-butting distortion. The band spends more than three hundred days a year on the road (they've just finished a tour with the Beastie Boys), and Spencer knows enough swampy, greasy-spoon guitar to conjure up an original blend of Isaac Hayes, Howlin' Wolf, and the psychobilly hero Hasil Adkins. (Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Aug. 31 at 8.)

The Oak Ridge Boys / Eddie Rabbit—Country music and lots of facial hair. (Westbury Music Fair. Aug. 31 at 8.)

Bruce Hornsby—For a while Hornsby was appearing on so many albums that it seemed as if he might be turning into Phil Collins. His 1993 record, "Harbor Lights," which tried to balance rock, R. & B., funk, and a whole mess of jazz, was ambitious to the point of being dizzying. His new one, "Hot House," at least manages to keep all those influences from crashing into one another. (Westbury Music Fair. Sept. 1 at 8.)

"Las Leyendas"—Two nights of burning salsa, featuring Celia Cruz, Tito Puente, and Eddie Palmieri on one bill, and Johnny Rivera, La India, and Gilberto Santa Rosa on the next. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 2-3 at 8.)

Dave Matthews Band—It's still too early to declare this Charlottesville, Virginia, quintet the new Pride of the South, but they're certainly the Pride of Our Nation's Undergraduates, who pack every show, sing along with every song, and purchase official Dave screen-savers for their laptops. Devotees of orange hair are in for a bummer, but if your idea of a swell time accommodates a charismatic singer coiling dramatic melodies around a mix of pop, funk, folk, and world beat, here's your gig. (Jones Beach Theatre. Sept. 3 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Hip-hop, jazz, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club.

Bar d'O, 29 Bedford St. (627-1580)—Low sofas, moderne ottomans, and venetian blinds make this mirrored living room the perfect spot for late-night love. Most nights, the music is up-to-the-minute seventies, but Saturdays and Sundays, gender channeller **JOEY ARIAS** sets the ceiling fans awhirl.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Sept. 1: Ed Palermo and his sixteen-piece band play the music of Frank Zappa. Sept. 2: **BUSTER POINDEXTER.**

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Sept. 2: **FLAT DUO JETS.**

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront usually given over to a young sandals-and-socks sort of crowd.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. Aug. 30: Homunculus. . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, **GEGGY TAH,** whose music appears on the "Blue in the Face" soundtrack, takes over on Sept. 5.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Aug. 30-31: **BIG TIME SARAH,** a gravel-throated belter from Mississippi.

China Club, 2130 Broadway, at 75th St. (877-1166)—Glam seekers come here hoping to rub shoulders with models and celebrities but instead find themselves hypnotized by the big fish tank over the bar. Occasionally, rock stars do show up to jam after a performance in town, but mostly you'll find a roster of heavily moussed upstarts.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, poseurs, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. Live music nightly.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel dungeon deep in the heart of the meat district. Aug. 31: Vineland and Emma Peel. Sept. 2: **BLOND REDHEAD.** Tuesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. . . . ¶ Friday night is Squeeze Box, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest.

Downtime, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. S. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **DRESSING ROOM DIVAS** are in the house every Friday night.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Aug. 30: **JANE KELLY WILLIAMS,** a great new folk singer. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

Gonzalez y Gonzalez, 625 Broadway, at Houston St. (473-8787)—Loud, brash, and big—de rigueur for the lower-Broadway dining scene. The stage is in the rear, about a city block from the entrance.

Ibis Supper Club, 327 W. 44th St. (262-1111)—Live music, belly dancing, and an honest-to-God whirling dervish, every Tuesday through Sunday.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Aug. 31: German *über*-howler **NINA HAGEN.** Sept. 3: **UFO,** the eighties-era metal band that gave the world the guitarist Michael Schenker. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—An unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can drink cheap and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. Aug. 31: Zydeco with **LOUP GAROU.**

Match, 160 Mercer St. (343-0020)—This tragically hip SoHo *boîte* is the place to be every Sunday night, thanks to the **SHORTY JACKSON LEGACY BLUES BAND.** Dining.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Romance awaits! Meet your date at the World Trade Center and hold hands on the PATH as it burrows its way under the Hudson to Hoboken, the burg that gave the world baseball and Ol' Blue Eyes. Sept. 1: The Original Sin. Sept. 3: **EDWYN COLLINS.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Sept. 1: **GARY LUCAS** and the **HUMPHRIES.** Sept. 4: **EL VEZ,** "the Mexican Elvis." Mr. Vez is far more than your run-of-the-mill Elvis impersonator: he claims to be the illegitimate man-child of the King and Charo. He sings in Spanish and wears a layered Velcro outfit that he slowly unpeels and tosses into the audience. With tender vocal support from the lovely Elvetts.

TABLES FOR TWO

Dining around town

Rosa Mexicano, 1063 First Ave., at 58th St. (753-7407)—Rosa is not the chef. Rosa is a color—a rich, distinctly Mexican watermelon-pink—and there are two ways to meet her: sit in the back, where the incandescence of the western wall bathes you in a subtropical blush; or sit anywhere else and order the frozen pomegranate margarita, which has the same effect. But don't put all the blame on the tequila if you begin to feel disoriented. The chef, Josefina Howard, has chosen subtly from the great mestizo cuisine of Mexico, and many of the dishes on the menu are not as familiar to most New Yorkers as they are to the Mexican diplomats and celebrities—like the novelist Laura Esquivel and the actress María Félix—who frequent the restaurant for the food that Howard calls "the Mexican upper-middle-class home cooking of the fifties."

When it comes to ordering, the most rewarding strategy is to pick adventurously and at length from the appetizers: spicy guacamole prepared tableside; two ceviches, of grouper or scallops; cold shrimps in a Chinese-mustard-and-chili vinaigrette. To settle on a main course, however, is to choose between extremes. Blander alternatives (a creditable grilled chicken) seem geared to gringo palates, while the farther-out offerings need either footnotes (like the crêpes filled with cuitlacoche[1]) or a motive (a hangover is the traditional prerequisite for the tripe). Besides, it would take the appetite of a ranch hand to finish off one of the entrées, and that might imply too much of a commitment to stomach—especially when there are all those alluring desserts: Kahlúa aspic, mango fruitcake, guanábana ice cream, or an after-dinner crêpe (this one with a goat-milk caramel sauce).

It's a good idea to fast before you arrive; the trip south is best if you travel light. (Open every night for dinner. Entrées $14-$24.)

[1] A delectable corn-fungus concoction with the tang of truffles.

Monkey Bar, 60 E. 54th St. (838-2600)—Beyond the monkey murals, there's a bright see-and-be-seen dining arena that's perfect for committing high-profile indiscretions in a strapless gown. But the place to be is the dark and crowded bar up front, by the grand piano, where the bar stools look like stuffed olives. You perch on the pimiento. Dining.

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Sept. 2: From Japan, the **ORQUESTA DE LA LUZ.** Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to the music of the tropics. Sept. 2: **THE MIGHTY SPARROW.** Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This spacious and agreeable club offers a consistent lineup of blues greats. Longtime Chuck Berry pianist **JIMMY JOHNSON** hits the stage on Sept. 1.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Aug. 31: Thanks to Gravity. Monday nights are Konkrete Jungle, an evening of dub and trip-hop.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **NANCY LA MOTT** is currently at work through Sept. 2. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, Fridays and Saturdays to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—An airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery. Aug. 31: The Myron Walden quartet. Dining.

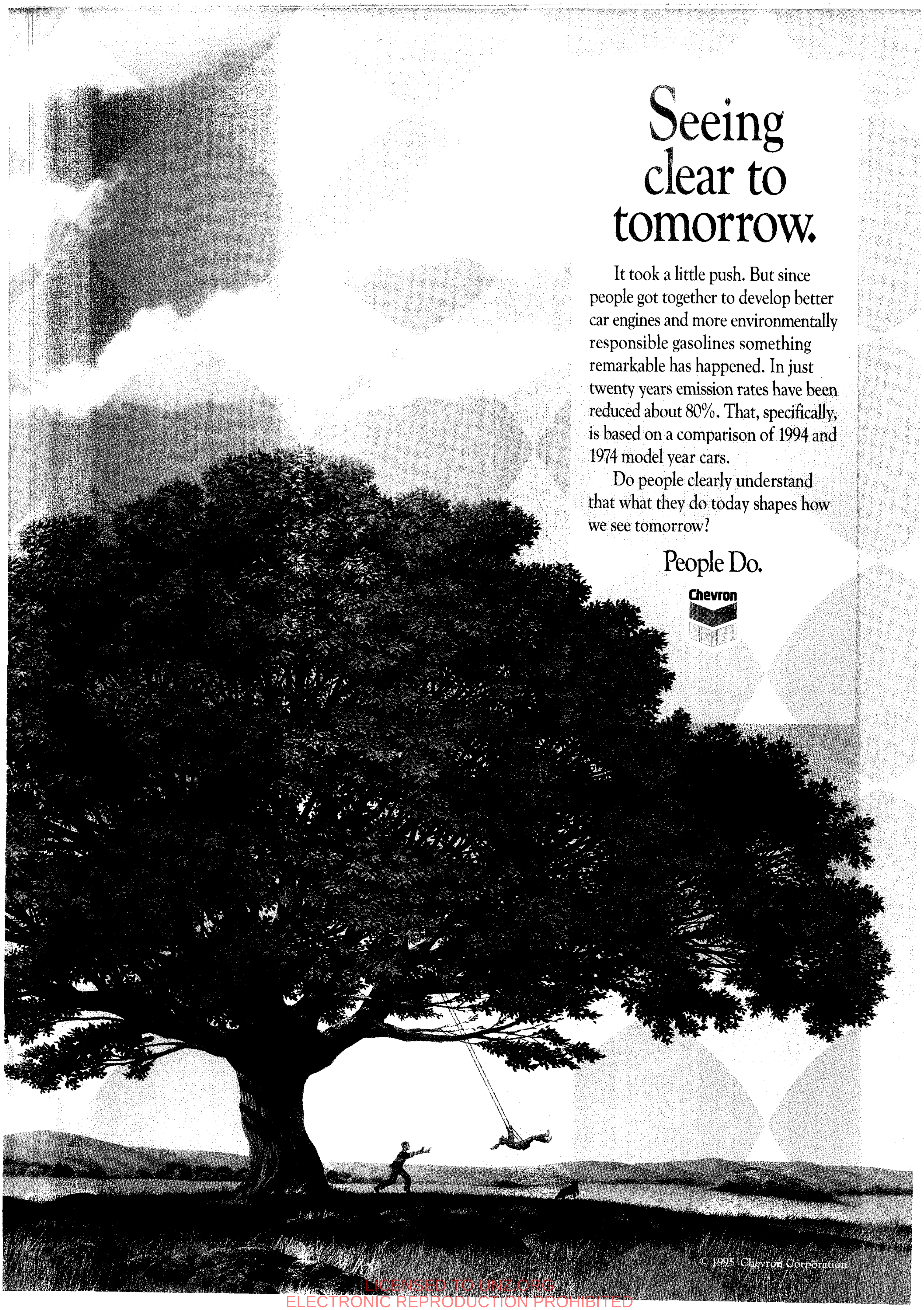
Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Through Sept. 3: **TANIA MARIA.** Saxophonist **JOE LOVANO,** who takes over on Sept. 5, is an inveterate searcher itchy for change. He's in the business of smashing preconceptions about what contemporary jazz groups should be. With the **PAT MARTINO** quartet. Dining.

Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in charge at the Bemelmans Bar. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes in curios from the twenties and thirties like "Kitten on the Keys," but he has also been known to play cartoon theme songs if the mood (or the crowd) warrants it. Agreeable and reassuring without being overgracious, he's sort of a curio himself.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through Oct. 1: **MARIAN MC PARTLAND.** As jazz institutions go, McPartland is pretty frisky, and her piano work is as elegant as ever. Taking her lead from Bill Evans, she has developed a great ear for integrating bass and drums within her own democratic trios. The **RICHIE COLE** trio swings by on Oct. 3. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-



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foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, this jazz club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpet in the V.I.P. room upstairs. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Through Oct. 1: the **KENNY KIRKLAND** quartet. The **LEON PARKER** band takes over on Oct. 3.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Aug. 30-Sept. 2: Piano and bass with **JUNIOR MANCE** and **CALVIN HILL.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Aug. 31: **SCREAMING HEADLESS TORSOS.** Sept. 1-2: The **STEVE TURRE SHELL CHOIR.** This ingenious group of moonlighting jazz men produces an otherworldly wall of conch sounds that conjures up everything from seascapes to the Ellington reed section. Sept. 5: **DEREK BAILEY** and **JOHN ZORN.** Back in the sixties, British guitarist Bailey began coaxing magical sounds from his instrument. He's still as enchanted today; in Bailey's hands, texture and sonic inquiry overcome melody with anarchic charm. Zorn remains the premier avant-jazz instigator.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **GENE BERTONCINI** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Metropolis, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—The basement of this swank café is now hosting a series of high-fibre gigs. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. At the start of his career, in the postwar forties and fifties, **VIC DAMONE** (through Sept. 2) embodied the placid opulence of the era: he was polite and handsome, and his voice was as smooth and lustrous as silk taffeta (and just as stiff). He had a little success in Hollywood and a bit more on vinyl, but more than anything else it's the years of supper clubs and casinos that have given him the distinctive ease that all the Bill Murrays and Harry Connicks of the world can only parody or covet. He doesn't swing, but his phrasing is conversational, and the voice itself is something to marvel at. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and the Kit McClure sextet, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—A new contender in New York's ever-changing jazz topography, this aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Sept. 3: **BOBBY WATSON'S ELECTRIC SEXTET.** The **CEDAR WALTON** trio takes over on Sept. 5.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room, which resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over-the-top as the rest of the establishment. Through Sept. 3: **ILLINOIS JACQUET.** Now in his seventies, the tenor saxophonist is a journeyman survivor whose career high points include his famous solo on Lionel Hampton's recording of "Flying Home," his appearance in Gjon Mili's short film, "Jammin' the Blues," and his screeching, stomping tenor "battles" in the fifties, as a member of Jazz at the Philharmonic. In 1983, he decided to put together a big band, and it has become a smooth, highly popular Basie-like combo, easy to dance to and most notable for its leader's sumptuous sound.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, smells, and feels like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. Through Sept. 3: the **STEPHEN SCOTT** trio. Scott approaches the piano differently from his peers. Linearity is only one option for this prodigiously gifted, wholly eccentric upstart; his phrasing and rhythms seem accountable only to his whims. Scott's dashing style has all the I'll-try-if-I-want-to bravado of his mentor, Betty Carter. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—A tiny, low-key supper club where the jazz, like the Spanish-American cuisine, can take on a spicy, multicultural flavor. **GUST WILLIAM TSILIS,** who drops by Sept. 1-3, is an ambitious player who has been perfecting a compelling style that moves beyond the terrain worked by Bobby Hutcherson and Gary Burton. He's pushing the vibraphone into the next century. Tsilis also takes on the marimba.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Sept. 2: piano and bass with **HILTON RUIZ** and **ANDY MC CLOUD.**

• •

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I TURNED OUT A PUNK (Big Audio Dynamite, "F-Punk").

I DON'T WANT TO GROW UP (Ramones, "¡Adios, Amigos!").

I'M THE OCEAN (Neil Young, "Mirror Ball").

ISOBEL (Björk, "Post").

THINGS GO WRONG (Chris Isaak, "Forever Blue").

ST. THERESA (Joan Osborne, "Relish").

I CAN DREAM (Stacy Dean Campbell, "Hurt City").

HOLE IN THE BUCKET (Spearhead, "Home").

LOVELY HULA HANDS (Junior Brown, "Junior High").

SHAKE SOME ACTION (Cracker, "Original Music from the Motion Picture 'Clueless' ").

BOOMBASTIC (Shaggy, "Boombastic").

NEED YOU AROUND (Smoking Popes, "Born to Quit").

CHINATOWN (Luna, "Penthouse").

DRIVING WITH THE BRAKES ON (Del Amitri, "Twisted").

UNDER (Filter, "Short Bus").

SHAME (Low, "Long-Division").

THIS IS A CALL (Foo Fighters, "Foo Fighters").

MOTORWAY (Guided by Voices, "Alien Lanes").

SMELLS LIKE QUEER SPIRIT (Pansy Division, "Pile Up").

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ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"American Relief Sculpture" features bronze, marble, and plaster works by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Herbert Adams, Karl Bitter, Olin Levi Warner, and others. Through Oct. 16. . . . ¶ The fifty-three paintings, drawings, and watercolors that make up the Annenberg collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterworks are on view. Through Nov. 26. . . . ¶ "An Egyptian Bestiary," a large non-petting zoo of falcons, baboons, hippos, and ibis, in stone, ivory, gold, bronze, and wood. Through Oct. 15. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open, when weather permits. Through Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Video Spaces: Eight Installations" presents some widely divergent sculptural uses of the medium. The best piece is by Tony Oursler: a tiny, limp doll with the face of a screaming woman projected onto its head. A challenging and sometimes rewarding exhibition. Through Sept. 12. . . . ¶ Leon Levinstein's street photographs of people in New York neighborhoods from the fifties through the seventies. Through Oct. 12. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Georg Baselitz." A large survey of work by the East German painter famous for his upside-down figures. The explosion of neo-expressionism in the early eighties left a bad taste with viewers who lean toward more self-conscious art—heavy paint trowelled onto canvas didn't strike everyone as a guarantee of deep emotion. Baselitz, who had been earnestly pursuing his Sturm-und-Drang vision since the sixties, was always the most convincing artist of the bunch. His ragged painterly style remains assured: purposely rough (to convey the full flavor of torment), but often beautiful. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ "Josef Albers: Glass, Color, and Light." A beautiful and unusual exhibition of paintings on glass, glass constructions, oil paintings, and photographs. The German émigré Albers is best known in this country for his color studies, his teaching (at Yale), and his seemingly interminable series "Homage to the Square"; on the evidence of this show, he was far livelier as a young contributor to that hotbed of high modernist art and design the Bauhaus. His earliest uses of glass filter the Gothic stained-glass aesthetic through the scrim of German Expressionism and Kandinsky's abstractionism. But with "Park" (circa 1924), he found a balance between calm geometric order and the excitement of optical pulsation. Most of the subsequent works, on opaque sandblasted glass, combine the mechanical Bauhaus sensibility with Mondrian's neoplasticism—and they're superb. Through Sept. 17. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A terrific and illuminating double bill: "Edward Hopper and the American Imagination" (through Oct. 15) and "Florine Stettheimer: Manhattan Fantastica" (through Nov. 5). Hopper's work, with its solitary figures moving like somnambulists through otherwise vacant streets and interiors, embodies a very American vision of urban loneliness transformed by inexplicable moments of transcendence. Stettheimer, by contrast, epitomized, in both her art and her life, the fertile marriage of café society and the avant-garde. Her effervescent paintings record the milieu she cultivated (it was quite a set: Carl Van Vechten, Parker Tyler, Virgil Thomson, and Marcel Duchamp were all among the regulars) in moods of brittle irony and poetic reverie. . . . ¶ "Views from Abroad: European Perspectives on American Art." Through Oct. 1. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A hundred and forty botanical watercolors, illustrations, engravings, and lithographs are on view; a third of them are of orchids. Among the artists represented are Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Margaret Mee, Marilena Pistoia, and Georg Dionys Ehret. . . . ¶ The skeletons of some one hundred saurischian and ornithischian dinosaurs have been cleaned and repositioned, and they're waiting for you. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of the career of Diane Itter (1946-1989), a fibre artist who worked in miniature, using only fine linen thread and a knotting process. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Marriage in Form," a display of Kay Sekimachi's layered weavings and paper designs and Bob Stocksdale's turned wood bowls. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Facets of the Same Nature: A Survey of Contemporary Dutch Ceramics." Through Oct. 1. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—Monkeys acting like humans, monkeys in their natural state, and monkeys as divine figures: these images grace sculptures, prints, and objects from India, Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan in a show called . . . "Monkey." Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

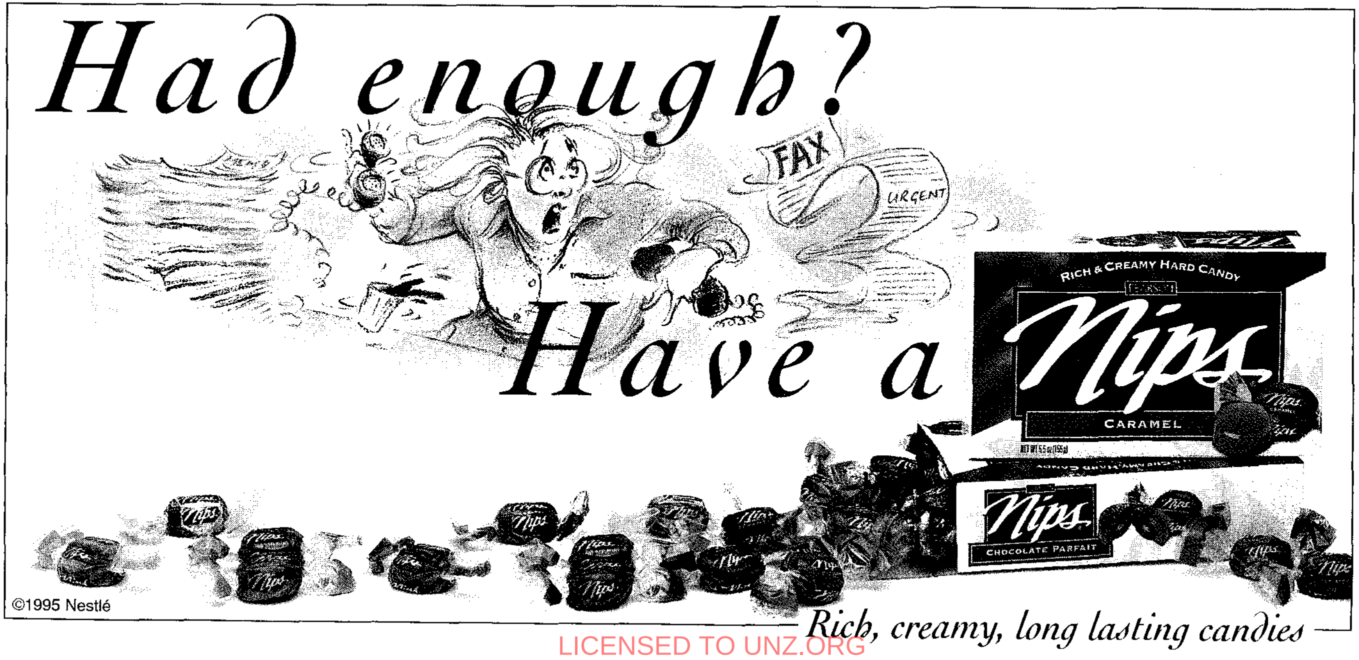
Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—The fifteenth annual "Artists in the Marketplace" exhibition features the work of thirty-six young New York-area artists. Through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ "Traces: The Body in Contemporary Photography" presents images by Juan Carlos Alóm, Gerardo Suter, Luis González-Palma, Eugenia Vargas, Lyle Ashton Harris, Lorna Simpson, Jeanne Dunning, and others. Through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ "David Padilla Cabrera y Linda Matalon." Paintings on wood by the former; drawings and sculptures using gauze, graphite, wax, tar, and wire by the latter. Through Sept. 10. (Open Wednesdays, 3 to 9; Thursdays and Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The area from Union Square to Madison Square, between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, was known to the late Victorians as Ladies Mile, and "Ladies Mile: Emporia and Entertainments" revels in clothes, accessories, dolls, and memorabilia from that time and place. . . . ¶ "A Century Apart: Images of Struggle & Spirit, Jacob Riis and Five Contemporary Photographers." Documents of the city's poor by the nation's first photojournalist, alongside work on similar themes by Martine Barrat, Mary Ellen Mark, Margaret Morton, Jeffrey Henson Scales, and Fred R. Conrad. Through Sept. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Contemporary British Architecture," a survey of recent projects, composed of drawings, paintings, photographs, and models from the last four summer exhibitions of Britain's Royal Academy of Arts. The visions of Richard Rogers, Norman Foster, Lucy Malein, Nicholas Grimshaw, and the late James Stirling are among those on view. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ A display of American Impressionist paintings from the Academy's collection includes works by Chase, Sargent, Hassam, and Parker. Through Sept. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W.—"On the Avenue, Fifth Avenue," a trim little exhibition of prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and historical objects devoted to the evolution of our great thoroughfare, which suggests that once upon a time New York really *was* paradise. A photograph of St. Luke's Hospital, at 54th Street, reveals that in 1865 the Avenue was a country lane. Architect George B. Post's cross-sectional view of Cornelius Vanderbilt's mansion makes even a servant's life in those days look dreamy. (Don't miss the portrait in the corridor outside, by an unknown painter, of Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury—an eighteenth-century governor of New York—posed coquettishly in full drag, with an ivory fan. Really.) Through Sept. 17. . . ¶ In "Treasury of the Past," an object or a set of objects representing each year from 1750 to 1950 is on view. Through Sept. 17. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Writers in Wartime: Looking at World War II," a selection of diaries, letters, first editions, and working proofs by Mann, Auden, Woolf, Hellman, Steinbeck, Kerouac, and others. Through Oct. 7. (Berg Collection. Closed Mondays.) . . . ¶ "What Price Freedom" features twenty objects, from a Jefferson draft of the Declaration of Independence to a student handbill distributed in Tiananmen Square. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) . . . ¶ Part one



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of "The Collecting Adventure, 1895-1995" examines the way the library has documented and preserved avant-garde and pop culture. Through Sept. 1. (Salomon Room.) . . . ¶ The librarians have chosen a hundred and fifty books, ranging from rare editions to dog-eared paperbacks, as the "Books of the Century." Through Oct. 28. (Third Floor Gallery.) (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—With its twelve galleries and peaceful, ivy-walled center garden, this museum is an oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of the artist's sculptures. Through Nov. 29. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—The exhibition from this year's artists-in-residence program features the work of Petrona Morrison, Rudzani Nemasetoni, and George R. Smith. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Mothers, Fathers, and Legendary Ancestors: Selections of Classical African Sculpture," more than ninety works from the museum's holdings and from private collections. Through Oct. 1. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, except Labor Day, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Dan Witz—Large, oddly shaped canvases of such sights as a circle of businessmen performing yoga. Through Sept. 5. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Open daily, 9 to 7.)

"Male Desire"—Summer camp, in the form of homoerotic art by thirty artists. The show is not (or not merely) an exercise in lubriciousness. We are reminded, for example, that George Bellows and Grant Wood were just as obsessed with manliness as was Tom of Finland, whose simpering black-leather bimbos are starting to look like classics. Rockwell Kent's brawny sailor boys and J. C. Leyendecker's flawless preppies could have moonlighted as models for Paul Cadmus's very amusing "YMCA Locker Room." Also included are six etchings by David Hockney from his influential suite based on poems by C. P. Cavafy, and work by Eric Fischl, Keith Haring, Larry Rivers, John Button, and Andy Warhol. Through Sept. 16. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St.)

Group Show—Recent acquisitions of work by self-taught artists and by German and Austrian artists. Those represented include Earl Cunningham, Grandma Moses, and Horace Pippin among the former, and Lovis Corinth, Oskar Kokoschka, Käthe Kollwitz, and Egon Schiele among the latter. Through Sept. 8. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. Closed Mondays.)

OTHER VENUES

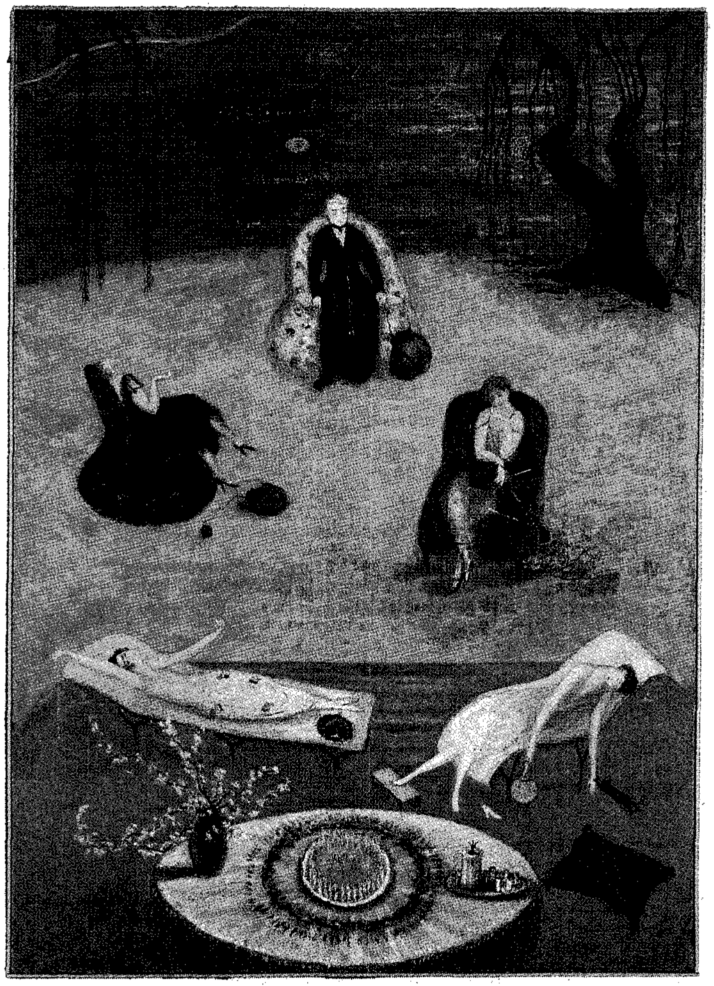
"Affirmative Actions: Artists at Work"—Creative Time's twelfth annual "Art in the Anchorage" exhibition, held in the vaults of the Brooklyn Bridge, consists of nine large-scale installations that cross disciplines and mediums: a "Medicinal Garden," by Joan Bankemper; a large suspended model of the Brooklyn Bridge, by Karin Giusti in collaboration with faculty and students from Brooklyn College; a Friday-and-Saturday-night cabaret; theatrical performances; skateboarding displays and a competition; and much more. Through Sept. 14. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, 1 to 6. For schedules, directions, and other information, call 206-6674.)

"Samuel Parsons, Jr. and the Art of Landscape Architecture"—Parsons (1844-1923) designed several New York City parks, among them Thomas Jefferson, DeWitt Clinton, and Canal Street. His thirty years of service in the Parks Department are celebrated with original plans and renderings, archival photographs, postcards, and memorabilia. Through Sept. 8. (Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St.)

Grand Central Terminal—In the Beaux Arts Main Waiting Room (where one imagines a sumptuous banquet being held while an enormous crowd waltzes in the Main Concourse) stands "Man with a Heart," Jonathan Borofsky's rather cold twenty-foot sculptures of men (one black, one white) with glowing, beating hearts. . . . ¶ Steve Gerberich's witty, slapdash sculptural accumulations are tucked into a glass-walled space across from Grand Central Books. Gerberich treats social and environmental themes with satisfying irreverence: "Shooting Gallery" offers a bison on a spit above an antique cabinet full of grenades, toy guns, and cowboy boots lined up like a naturalist's specimens—the whole kit and caboodle resting on a zebra-skin rug. The smallest work is "Hummingbird Heater," a sculptural haiku in which a toy bird dangles in the hot air inside a small, old space heater.

Socrates Sculpture Park—"Pop-up," new works with Pop influences, including Michael Tong's giant Buddha head, made from rusting steel plates, and Karin Giusti's hundred-and-fifty-foot strand of giant "pearls," complete with hydraulic oyster. Also on view are pieces by Gunilla Bandolin, Alberto Riaño, Barbara Grygutis, and Nancy Rubins. Through Sept. 17. (Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City. Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

Sculpture Center at Roosevelt Island—A mostly outdoor installation of works by six artists. Heather Nicol's "Pick Me," a collection of altered and illuminated prom gowns hanging from the ceiling of an atrium, is a coup de théâtre. Through Nov. 15. (North end of Main St. For information, call 832-4540.)



"Heat," by Florine Stettheimer, at the Whitney Museum.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Karl Struss (1886-1981)—Platinum and palladium prints of the New York that was, by the Manhattan-born Photo-Secessionist and cinematographer ("Sunrise," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The Fly"). Through Oct. 14. (Equitable Gallery, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"Large Bodies"—Large-scale photographs of various parts of the body, by, among others, Cindy Sherman, John Coplans, Chuck Close, Andres Serrano, and Bill Jacobson. Through Sept. 1. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

"On Holiday"—Delightful views of swimmers, sunbathers, operagoers, picnickers, and baseball players, by Max Dupain, J. H. Lartigue, Danielle Weil, John Loengard, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, and others. Through Sept. 2. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

"Under 8 x 10 Inches"—Small prints by more than thirty artists, including George Tice, Evelyn Hofer, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Caponigro, André Kertész, and Jill Seymour. Through Sept. 1. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Nagasaki Journey: The Photographs of Yosuke Yamahata." Pictures taken in that city on August 10, 1945, the day after the bombing, by a twenty-eight-year-old Japanese Army photographer. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ The war in the Pacific, as seen through the cover photographs and photo essays of *Life* magazine correspondents. Through Oct. 1. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"An American Century of Photography: From Dry-Plate to Digital—The Hallmark Photographic Collection." Despite strong efforts, this display of two hundred works, by both masters and less familiar artists, is uneven, but several of the more humble offerings are rewarding. William B. Post's "Intervale Winter" (1899) is a landscape concerned more with space than with pictorialism; the vision prefigures Instamatic snapshot composition by half a century. "House of a Thousand Windows" (1912), by Alvin Langdon Coburn, presents a dark, skewed-perspective view of an early high-rise that looks like a tabletop model. And Kentaro Nakamara's "Evening Wave" (1927) may be the most beautiful seascape ever. Through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ "Eyes on an Era." Pictures from the thirties through the sixties by photojournalist Irving Haberman. Through Sept. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and the Museum of the City of New York.)

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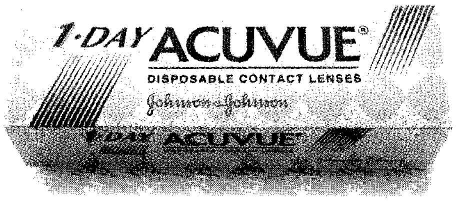

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS

Lunchtime Music—Free midday concerts. The Duo Violao (a classical-guitar team) plays music by Granados, de Falla, and others. (Battery Park. Aug. 31 at 12:30. . . . **note:** The concert will be repeated at Dante Park, Broadway at W. 63rd St., on Aug. 31 at 6.) . . . ¶ A recital by flutist Don Bailey. (Green Auditorium, 40 W. 68th St. Aug. 31 at 1.) . . . ¶ A performance by cellist Sarah Choi and pianist Miko Kominami. (Continental Center, 180 Maiden Lane. Sept. 5 at 12:30.)

Bargemusic—Violinists Ida Levin and Carmit Zori, violist Robert Rinehart, and cellist Fred Sherry perform contrapuntally intense, end-of-career masterworks: Bach's "The Art of Fugue" and Beethoven's String Quartet in C-Sharp Minor (Op. 131). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Aug. 31 at 7:30 and Sept. 3 at 4.)

Queens Symphony Orchestra—Arthur Fagen conducts free outdoor concerts. (Queens Botanical Garden, Main St. and Dahlia Ave., Flushing. Aug. 31 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Seuffert Band Shell, Forest Park, Woodhaven. Sept. 3 at 5.)

Iris Regev—Cellist, with harpsichordist Ilan Rechtman, performing two sonatas by Bach and three by Vivaldi. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Sept. 3 at noon.)

Trio Time—Violinist Ariel Shimai, cellist Iris Regev, and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform trios by Haydn and Mozart. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 3 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

LISTENING BOOTH

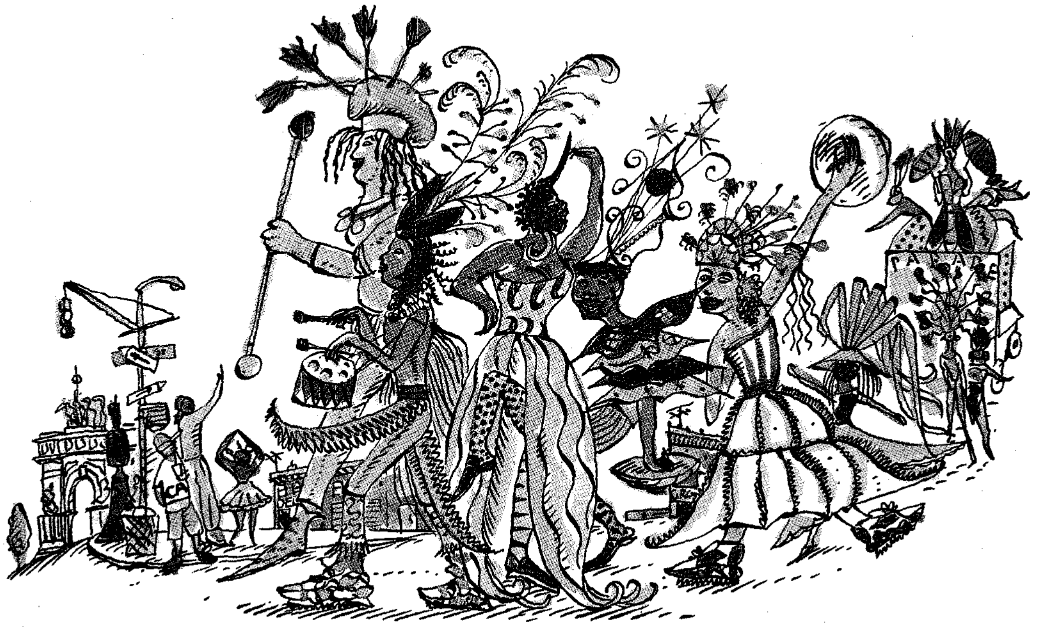
Testimonies of War/Kriegszeugnisse, 1914-1945 (Largo)—The obscure repertoire on this two-CD compilation covers Nazi-era music from several European perspectives. The view from ground zero comes from Boris Blacher (1903-1975), a prolific composer, little performed today, who managed to survive in Germany despite championing "degenerate" music and being blacklisted for a distant strain of Jewish ancestry. The sampling here, performed by several accomplished soloists, choirs, and orchestras, ranges from neoclassicism and balletic lyricism to serialism and jazz; the accompanying program notes clarify political undertones that might otherwise escape the listener. The disks also include pacifist works by Weill, Milhaud, Vaughan Williams, and Harrington Shortall, as well as a pair of stunning psalm settings, reminiscent of Bach's chorale preludes, composed in 1935 by the German-born Berthold Goldschmidt, who, at ninety-two, lives on today as a witness to the outrage.

Kreisler and Korngold Quartets (Koch International Classics)—Among the Austrian musicians who fled to America in the Nazi era were Fritz Kreisler and Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Kreisler, though better known as a violinist, also composed a bittersweet string quartet, which the **Angeles String Quartet** plays on a new release, coupled with Korngold's haunting Quartet No. 3. The young foursome seem reluctant to stress the works' inherent gemütlichkeit, but their crackerjack sense of ensemble bodes well for the future.

OUT OF TOWN

Music Mountain—Sept. 2 at 8: A recital featuring Baroque flute player John Solum. . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 3: The Shanghai String Quartet brings the season to a close with a performance of quartets by Mozart (in F Major, K. 590) and Beethoven (in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3), as well as Schumann's Piano Quintet (with Ruth Laredo assisting). (Falls Village, Conn. For information about tickets, call 1-203 824-7126.)

Maverick Concerts—In the final concert of the season, the Miami String Quartet plays Robert Starer's Quartet No. 2. Mendelssohn's Octet rounds out the program, with noted chamber musicians—violinist Jaime Laredo and cellist Sharon Robinson of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, violinist Kikuei Ikeda of the Tokyo String Quartet, and violist Setsuko Nagata of the Cremona Trio—completing the ensemble. (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. Sept. 3 at 2.)



The West Indian American Carnival, in Brooklyn.

EMMANUEL PIERRE

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Calypso Promenade—On September 4, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., the West Indian American Carnival takes over Eastern Parkway, in Brooklyn, with a parade of dancers in Afro-Caribbean headdresses, floats rumbling along to calypso bands like Hawks International and Sesame Flyer, and a Labor Day market of food stands serving jerk chicken and goat, roti, callaloo, and ginger beer and coco-mango drinks. The parade starts at Utica Avenue and traipses down the Parkway to Grand Army Plaza, then turns left onto Flatbush along this year's extended route, which will also include Ocean and Parkside Avenues. For more information, call 1-800 484-7690, ext. 4541.

Wigstock '95—Now that Hollywood has ushered drag into the mainstream (and isn't that Swayze child positively dowdy?), there are some questions to be answered about the annual bouffant blowout. Can the *grand hommage* get any *grand*er? Is it over? Or merely overrun? Only your hairdresser knows for sure. Wardrobe note: as in the past, party coördinators recommend sensible footwear. (The piers, Christopher St. at West St. Sept. 3, from 1 to 10.)

Readings—Aug. 31 at 12:30: Caterer Karen Lee serves samples of her goat-cheese-and-lentil salad prepared according to one of the recipes in her new cookbook, "The Occasional Vegetarian." (Barnes & Noble, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 5 at 7: At the third annual memorial reading for John Cage, on the composer's birthday, friends of the artist will read from their favorite Cagean texts. While the date for the memorial was not selected at random, the list of friends scheduled to perform remained, at press time, indeterminate. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 5 at 7:30: Novelist Scott Spencer introduces novelist Francine Prose, who will read from her latest work, "Hunters and Gatherers." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

Tours—Sept. 1 at 1:30: Naturalist Debbie Becker charts the migration of monarch butterflies, which are currently alighting on the milkweeds of the New York Botanical Garden, in the Bronx. For more information, call 1-718 817-8700. . . . ¶ Sept. 2 at 2:30: Bob Erler and Bob Palmer tour riotous and radical downtown, from the sites of the 1849 Astor Place riots and the Civil War draft riots to Webster Hall, where Samuel Gompers first attempted to organize professional baseball, in 1890. For more information, call 1-718 262-0948. . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 1: Seth Kamil of Big Onion Walking Tours marches past such landmarks of Lower East Side labor struggles as the lyceum where the International Ladies Garment Workers Union began and the nearby sweatshop where a hundred and forty-six Jewish and Italian women died in the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. For more information, call 439-1090.

SPORTS

U.S. Open—With its history of bare-knuckle, five-set battles (the gruelling Wilander-Lendl final in 1988 was a few minutes shy of five hours), this grand-slam event bills itself as a more American brand of tennis. But to those who tune in to the final matches, it still looks as though landing a seat in the courtside boxes is a who-you-know affair. Nevertheless, few sporting events can rival the democratic pleasures of a day pass during the early rounds in Flushing Meadows. You wander freely from court to far-flung court, amazed by the exceptional tennis from unheralded players with names like Gaudenzi and Boetsch and (incomparably) Smashnova. As the day declines, even the best center-court seats become vacant (sleep is important for the important); those early-round matches that last forever—in which upstarts stretch unsuspecting seeds to the limit—are jewels left behind for diehard, caffeinated fans. (U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, Queens. 1-718 760-6200. Aug. 28-Sept. 10.)

Our position, word by word.

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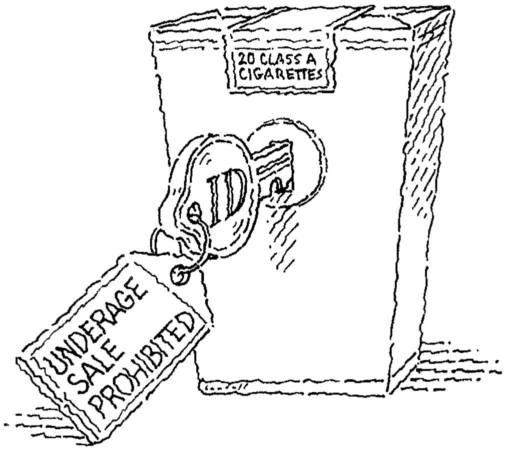

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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising According to Marek Edelman—Director Jolanta Dylewska has combined film footage shot by the Nazis with the recollections of the only surviving member of the uprising's leadership to document the events of March 19 through May 10, 1943. In Polish. Opening August 30. (Film Forum.)

The Innocent—Ian McEwan's 1990 novel of love and Cold War intrigue in nineteen-fifties Berlin, adapted for the screen by the author. Starring Anthony Hopkins, Isabella Rossellini, and Campbell Scott. Directed by John Schlesinger. Opening September 1. (Village East Cinemas and Sutton.)

Magic in the Water—On a lakeside vacation, a ten-year-old girl (Sarah Wayne), her older brother (Joshua Jackson), and their divorced, workaholic father (Mark Harmon) discover an endangered water monster, in a family comedy directed by Rick Stevenson, who co-wrote the script with Icel Dobell Massey. Also with Harley Jane Kozak. Opening August 30. (Gemini and Embassy.)

The Prophecy—The forces of good, in the form of a policeman (Elias Koteas) and a schoolteacher (Virginia Madsen), battle the forces of evil (Christopher Walken and Viggo Mortenson) for the soul of a child. Written and directed by Gregory Widen. Opening September 1. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

The Tie That Binds—Daryl Hannah and Keith Carradine play criminals out to reclaim the six-year-old daughter they have given up for adoption, in a thriller written by Michael Auerbach and directed by Wesley Strick. With Vincent Spano and Moira Kelly as the unlucky new parents. Opening September 1. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, and Embassy 1.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 28.)

The Amazing Panda Adventure—In China, a ten-year-old American boy (Ryan Slater), his naturalist father (Stephen Lang), a young girl (Yi Ding), and an old man (Wang Fei) set out to save a panda trapped by poachers. Directed by Christopher Cain. Written by Jeff Rothberg and Laurice Elehwany. (Village East Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Sutton; through Aug. 31.)

Apollo 13—Ron Howard's movie, like the perilous 1970 lunar mission itself, gets home safely only by the skin of its teeth. Dean Cundey's cinematography is drab, James Horner's score is unbearable, and Howard retards the momentum with frequent cutaways to the astronauts' families, who are, unsurprisingly, mighty worried. But the acting—especially by Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, and Bill Paxton (as the astronauts) and Ed Harris (as a NASA flight controller)—is sharp and persuasive. And the screenplay, by William Broyles, Jr., and Al Reinert, makes the scientific details both comprehensible and exciting. In the end, this failed mission seems like the most impressive achievement of the entire space program: a triumph not of planning but of inspired improvisation.—T.R. (7/10/95) (Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Arabian Knight—An animated feature about a cobbler, a thief, and a princess, with voices supplied by Matthew Broderick, Jonathan Winters, and Jennifer Beals. Directed by Richard Williams, who co-wrote the script with Margaret French. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Sutton; through Aug. 31.)

Babe—The animal actors have human voices in Chris Noonan and George Miller's adaptation of Dick King-Smith's 1985 children's book, in which an intrepid pig competes for the world sheepdog championship. Directed by Noonan. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Metro Cinema.)

The Baby-Sitters Club—As a way of making money and hanging out together at the same time, twelve-year-old Kristy (played by Sissy Spacek's daughter, Schuyler Fisk—a tomboyish natural) and her friends set up a summer day camp. Girls don't goad each other into foolhardy acts of bravery or beat each other up the way boys do, so rather than building to a climax the movie remains loose and episodic. But it captures the sweet period just before girls cede their personalities to clothes envy and other terrors of adolescence, and like its main characters it is both commercially shrewd and appealingly square. With Ellen Burstyn as a neighbor and Peter Horton as Kristy's deadbeat father, whose sudden reappearance teaches her a lesson in responsibility. Written by Dalene Young, drawing on the series of preteen books by Ann M. Martin; directed, with considerable warmth (if not much flair), by Melanie Mayron, who played Melissa on "thirtysomething."—S.K. (19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Aug. 31.)

Beyond Rangoon—John Boorman's mysteriously graceful adventure movie is set in Burma in 1988. A depressed American traveller (Patricia Arquette) becomes separated from her tour group and enters the dense, dangerous wilderness of the real Burma, where she falls into the company of political dissidents and winds up running for her life. The movie evokes the day-to-day experience of living in a dictatorship—the stifling, helpless sensation of being pinned to the ground with a soldier's boot on your neck. While the story has more than its share of thrilling incidents, even the most elaborately staged scenes don't function merely as set pieces; Boorman's sense of rhythm gives the picture an arrowlike momentum that makes it seem much shorter than its ninety-nine minutes. It's an exciting film and, in the end, an overwhelmingly moving one—a masterpiece. Also with U Aung Ko, Frances McDormand, and Spalding Gray. Screenplay by Alex Lasker and Bill Rubenstein; cinematography by John Seale.—T.R. (8/21-28/95) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

The Brothers McMullen—A romantic comedy about three Irish-American siblings (Jack Mulcahy, Mike McGlone, and Edward Burns) who are reunited upon the death of their father. Written and directed by Burns. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Burnt by the Sun—Set in 1936, in the high summer of Stalinist rule, Nikita Mikhalkov's movie centers on a Soviet Army colonel (played by Mikhalkov) and the family group that circulates around him in an idyllic dacha. The idyll cracks when the state, in the person of a family friend (Oleg Menchikov), comes to wreak havoc. The director's eight-year-old daughter, Nadia, offers a sharp-eyed, wholly uncute performance, gazing at the unfolding events with the air of one who will never be able to banish them from her memory. The movie may sound dispiriting, but it has an amazing ability to cheer you up. In Russian.—A.L. (5/8/95) (Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

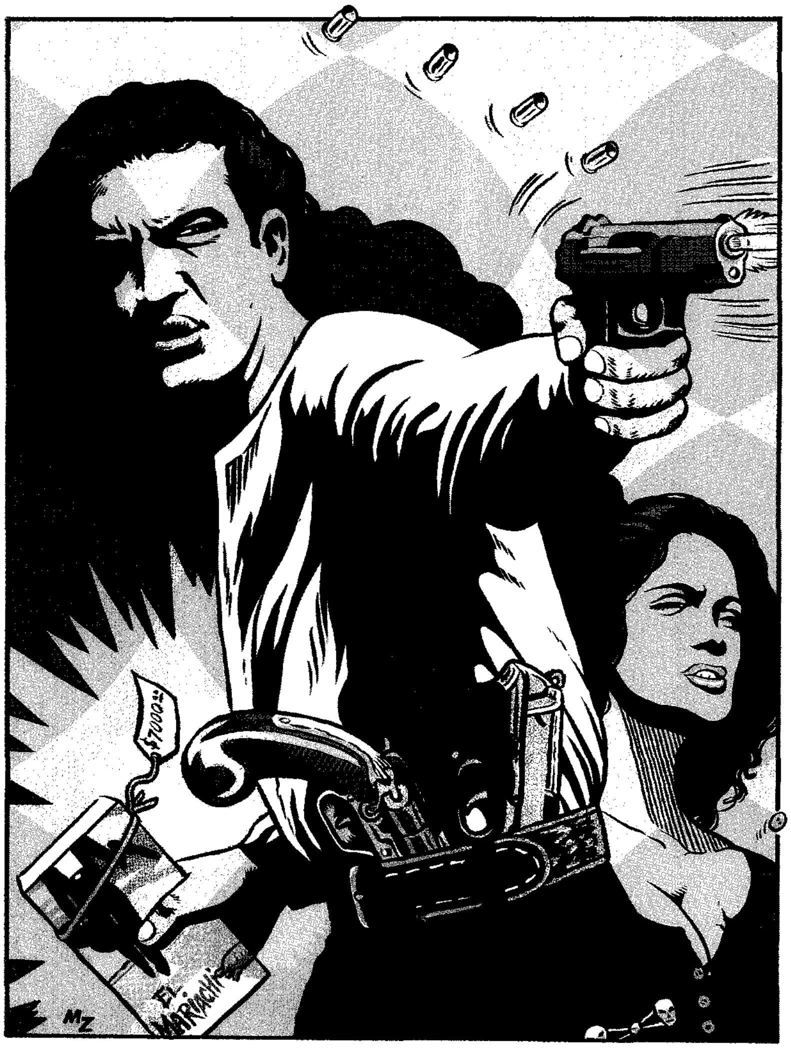
Clueless—The Beverly Hills high school in writer-director Amy Heckerling's comedy (based loosely on Jane Austen's "Emma") is a world of cellular phones, nose jobs, and fast, funny mall-speak, where all the girls love sexy makeovers and all the boys are beautiful young pups. Alicia Silverstone plays a matchmaking high-school queen named Cher who is so naïvely confident that she doesn't see how manipulative her behavior is. With its charming performances, bubblegum colors, and intentionally funny product placements, the movie is like a kiss in a candy store—silly and sweet.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, Waverly, Lincoln Square, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Aug. 31. . . .¶ Guild; starting Sept. 1.)

Country Life—A romantic comedy about sheep farmers and socialites in Australia in the nineteen-twenties, directed by and starring Michael Blakemore, who also wrote the screenplay—which is loosely based on Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." With Sam Neill, Greta Scacchi, John Hargreaves, and Kerry Fox. (Angelika 57.)

Crumb—Terry Zwigoff's brilliant, scary documentary about the underground-comics artist R. Crumb. While the film is reviewing Crumb's career, from its psychedelic-era heyday to the present, and following him as he goes about his everyday activities, it's also telling a harrowing story about his damaged family. The movie is often funny, but what makes it extraordinary is that it explores, without presuming to explain, the sources of a unique and savage comic sensibility. And it shows us that Crumb's gift—the detachment that allows him to create such hilariously contemptuous images of the world around him (and inside him)—is also a kind of curse, or, at least, a nasty habit.—T.R. (5/1/95) (Film Forum 3.)

Dangerous Minds—LouAnne Johnson (Michelle Pfeiffer), a divorced ex-Marine, teaches English in an urban Northern California high school, and her students are an unruly, education-resistant bunch—that is, a typical supporting cast for the heroic-teacher genre. Thanks to Pfeiffer's inventive acting, John N. Smith's movie does a fairly entertaining job of capturing the unscrupulous, guerrilla-like cunning of a good teacher in a bad school. But the cut-to-the-enlightenment dramaturgy of Ronald Bass's screenplay feels desperate and false. And in the final scenes the movie gets as sticky as "To Sir with Love." It canonizes the heroine needlessly: Pfeiffer looks plenty good without a halo. Also with George Dzundza and Courtney B. Vance. Based on Johnson's memoir, "My Posse Don't Do Homework."—T.R. (8/21-28/95) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through Aug. 31. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Sept. 1.)

Dead Funny—A comedy about a New Yorker (Elizabeth Peña) who discovers the corpse of her boyfriend (Andrew McCarthy) in her kitchen. Also with Paige Turco. Written and directed by John Feldman. (Village East Cinemas.)



Antonio Banderas and Salma Hayek in "Desperado."

MARK ZINGARELLI

Desperado—Robert Rodriguez' sequel to his 1993 "El Mariachi," with Antonio Banderas as the mariachi without a name. Also with Salma Hayek. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde—Tim Daly and Sean Young star in David Price's gender-bending update of Robert Louis Stevenson's tale. With Lysette Anthony, Stephen Tobolowsky, Harvey Fierstein, and Jeremy Piven. Written by Tim John, Oliver Butcher, William Davies, and William Osborne. (Village Theatre VII, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Embassy.)

Double Happiness—Jade (Sandra Oh), a self-confident twenty-two-year-old who lives with her parents, wants to be an actress; her overprotective parents, who are emigrants from Hong Kong, want her to marry a nice Chinese boy. The movie is billed as a comedy, but it's much more interesting for the repressive family dynamic it captures. Stephen Chang is excellent as the father. Written and directed by Mina Shum.—S.K. (Eastside Playhouse and Quad Cinema.)

Hyenas—A satire by the Senegalese director Djibril Diop Mambety, about a wealthy old woman (Ami Diakhate) who returns to the village of her youth. In Wolof. (Little Theatre.)

I Can't Sleep—A thriller set in Paris, about an aspiring Lithuanian actress (Katerina Golubeva), a musician from the Antilles (Alex Descas), his drag-queen brother (Richard Courcet), and the elderly residents of a hotel, who are being preyed on by a serial killer. Directed by Claire Denis, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jean-Pol Fargeau. In French. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Jeffrey—In adapting his hip, funny 1993 stage hit, Paul Rudnick has lost much of its charm and humor. The story of Jeffrey (Steven Weber), a gay man who decides to become celibate (because the fear of AIDS has taken all the fun out of sex) and then meets Mr. Right, seems dated, and Jeffrey whines so much that you lose patience with him. Onstage, Jeffrey's indecision played with some kick—he seemed to be hurting mainly himself—but the film, with all its tight closeups of the sad, rejected suitor, makes his actions seem mean. There are some laughs, and the excellent supporting cast (particularly Patrick Stewart and Nathan Lane) keeps its clever lines afloat. The director, Christopher Ashley, did an imaginative job staging the play, but his pacing here kills the comedy.—B.D. (Cinema 3rd Avenue, Quad Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Kids—Larry Clark's film follows some New York City teen-agers through a day and a night of largely self-destructive activity; these kids seem to be wandering in total darkness. Although the movie will undoubtedly be received as a wake-up call, a sobering report on a lost generation, what's fascinating—and unsettling—about it is Clark's unmistakable admiration for the recklessness of the young. The obsessive, ardent gaze he turns on his subjects as they stumble toward oblivion has a strangely aestheticizing effect; he can't help turning these wasted, aimless kids into icons of the beautiful and damned. Screenplay by Harmony Korine (who was nineteen when he wrote it).—T.R. (7/31/95) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Lie Down with Dogs—A gay New Yorker's first summer in Provincetown, Massachusetts, is the subject of an independent feature written and directed by, and also starring, Wally White. (Village East Cinemas.)

Living in Oblivion—Tom DiCillo's comedy is slight but smart, and it doesn't overstay its welcome. Steve Buscemi plays a harassed director trying to make a low-budget picture in New York, who suffers a plague of glitches that range from sour milk in the crew's coffee to an angry dwarf. It's the ideal part for Buscemi: pallid, ratty, and pop-eyed, he has the air of a man who is deeply in love with movies and wishes he weren't.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Lord of Illusions—The newest horror film written and directed by Clive Barker follows a New York City detective (Scott Bakula) on the trail of a celebrated magician (Kevin J. O'Connor). With Famke Janssen and Daniel Von Bargen. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Mortal Kombat—This martial-arts film, based on a video game and set to a techno beat, starts out promisingly: the actors look sinewy and primed for action, and the effects (mostly morphing) are convincing. But soon the movie falls flat under an uninspired good-versus-evil plot and pathetically simpleminded dialogue. To be fair, it tries for a tongue-in-cheek punch here and there, and, thanks to Christopher Lambert (sporting a Catherine Deneuve-like wig in the Obi-Wan Kenobi role), it lands a few. But the bulk of the movie is set in a grotto that owes much to Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion-animation isles without improving on them, and the fighting is endless. It's all paced swiftly enough—like an old kung-fu movie with a budget—but it could have used some witty dubbing. Directed by Paul Anderson.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Nadja—An independent feature, filmed in black and white, about a sexy vampire (Elina Löwensohn) and her twin brother (Jared Harris) in downtown Manhattan. With Peter Fonda, Martin Donovan, Galaxy Craze, and Suzy Amis. Written and directed by Michael Almereyda. (Angelika Film Center.)

The Net—Irwin Winkler's cyber-thriller shuffles morosely from action sequence to action sequence, like a long bus trip with multiple transfers. Sandra Bullock plays a computer whiz who stumbles on evidence of a sinister conspiracy; she's pretty and likable, but this wan chase picture needs a lot more than she can give it. The screenplay, by John Brancato and Michael Ferris, is remarkably free of ingenuity, and therefore of suspense. With Jeremy Northam and Dennis Miller.—T.R. (8/7/95) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Nine Months—Samuel (Hugh Grant), a child psychotherapist who doesn't like children, is aghast when he discovers that his girlfriend (Julianne Moore) is pregnant; they have just enough time to argue, split up, and bond again before the baby is born. The film's energy, such as it is, arises from Grant's patter with other men (an aggressive Tom Arnold, a lazily horny Jeff Goldblum). The women—Moore and Joan Cusack—are little more than magnets for male anxiety. They have the babies, the movie tells us with its sunny, reactionary guile; what more do they want? Directed by Chris Columbus.—A.L. (7/24/95) (62nd & Broadway.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," upon which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda in Isla Negra, the desolate corner of Chile where the poet spent his final years. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved two decades earlier to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Show—A documentary about hip-hop music, featuring concert footage of Craig Mack, Dr. Dre, Naughty by Nature, Run DMC, and other acts. Directed by Brian Robbins. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Smoke—Five years ago, the director Wayne Wang asked the novelist Paul Auster to work up one of his stories as a screenplay. The result—a highly cerebral intertwining of the lives of white and black characters in Brooklyn in 1990, centering on a cigar-store owner (Harvey Keitel) and a lonely writer (William Hurt)—is obviously a labor of love. But Wang's sentimentality and Auster's self-consciousness don't go together: the direction is literal, and the lines sound like short-story dialogue read aloud. Only Forest Whitaker, playing a guilty father, comes off well. A gorgeous sequence that runs behind the final credits—with no dialogue, just a song by Tom Waits—suggests what the film *might* have been. With Harold Perrineau, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Ashley Judd.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Something to Talk About—Julia Roberts stars as a Southern housewife who discovers that her husband (Dennis Quaid) is having an affair. With Robert Duvall, Gena Rowlands, Kyra Sedgwick, and Haley Aull. Directed by Lasse Hallstrom. Written by Callie Khouri. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Unzipped—A witty and fascinating look at the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi during the months leading up to his fall, 1994, show. Director Douglas Keeve and editor Paula Heredia capture the absurd amount of work that goes into the twenty-minute unveiling of a collection that consists largely of pink and orange fake furs. But Mizrahi—warm if occasionally dictatorial, compulsively curious, and a sponge for popular culture, from "Nanook of the North" to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show"—plays to the camera like a natural star. It's nice to see a behind-the-scenes documentary that isn't just out to expose warts. The movie isn't close to objective, though: it was co-produced by Nina Santisi, the vice president of Mizrahi, Inc., and Keeve and Mizrahi were having an affair when it was being shot. With Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Kate Moss, and other very familiar faces.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, and Lincoln Square.)

The Usual Suspects—In a season of fat blockbusters, a picture as brainy, bitter, and compact as this one comes as a shock and a treat. Five criminals, ranging from petty to pro, are herded into a police lineup on suspicion of armed robbery. They walk, but not before joining forces to plan a new crime—a bright idea that soon darkens with treachery and ends in a bulk order of dead bodies. Director Bryan Singer and screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie somehow keep from getting lost in the spiralling plot, which revels in rumors and flashbacks and the ominous feeling that they're being engineered by one man; the film is both a hunt for his identity and a game in which everyone—the good, the bad, and the audience—gets to play sucker. Singer's style may overheat now and then, but his cast, headed by Chazz Palminteri and Kevin Spacey, keeps things cool.—A.L. (8/14/95) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

Virtuosity—A thriller set in 1999, starring Denzel Washington as a retired Los Angeles police officer who returns to the force to capture a computer-generated criminal (Russell Crowe). With Kelly Lynch, Stephen Spinella, William Forsythe, and Louise Fletcher. Directed by Brett Leonard. Written by Eric Bernt. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through Aug. 31.)

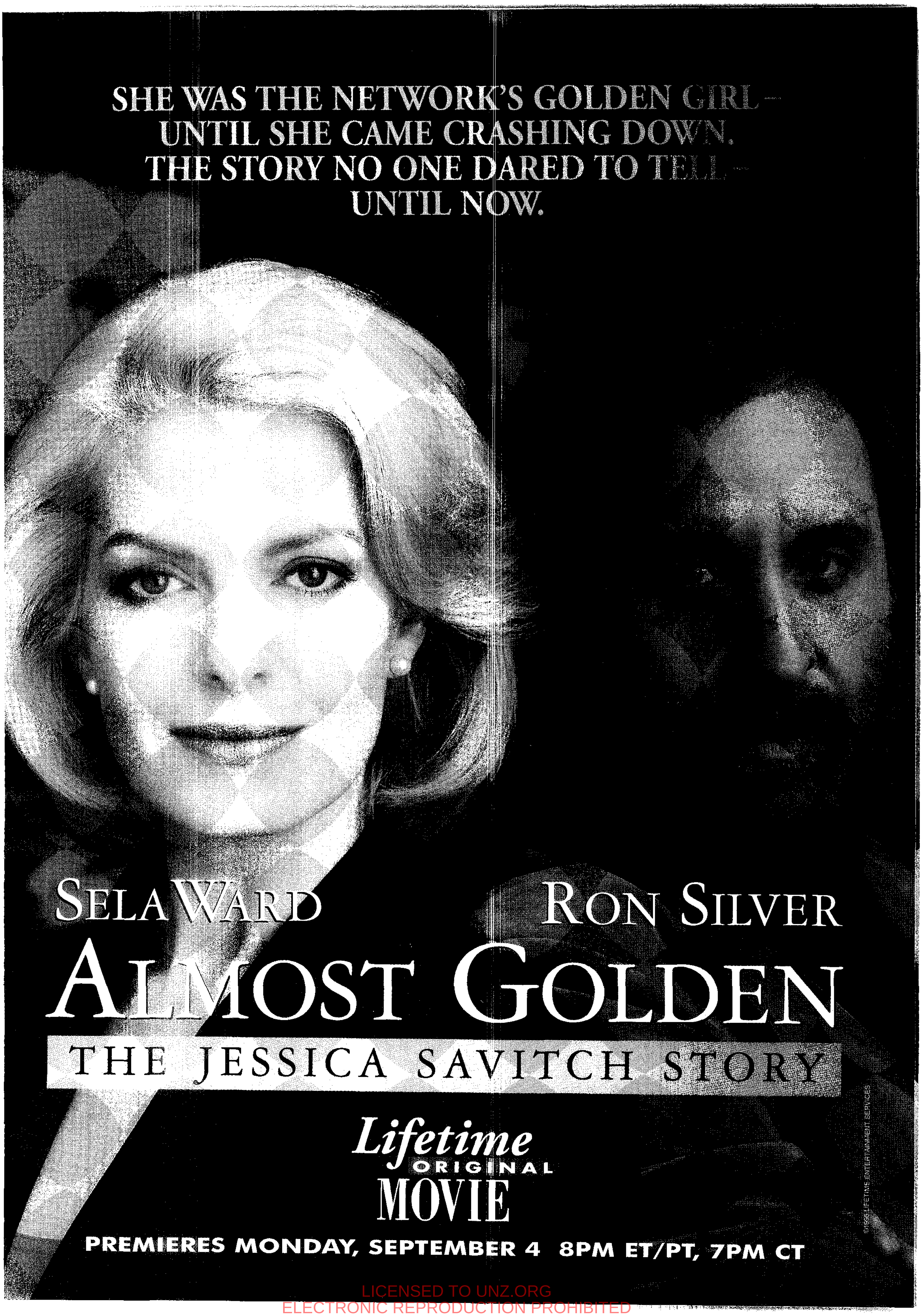
A Walk in the Clouds—Keanu Reeves plays a Second World War veteran who agrees to pose as the husband of a California vineyard owner's daughter (Aitana Sanchez-Gijon) when he learns that she is pregnant. With Giancarlo Giannini and Anthony Quinn. Directed by Alfonso Arau ("Like Water for Chocolate"). Written by Robert Mark Kamen, Mark Miller, and Harvey Weitzman. (Beekman, East 85th Street, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Waterworld—Kevin Costner plays the Mariner—part man, part fish—in a post-apocalyptic action picture of the "Mad Max" type. Lurking beneath its conventional adventure-movie surface is a bizarre environmental parable, in which Costner's rugged, ecologically correct loner battles a scurvy bunch of pirates called Smokers, who smoke cigarettes, drink Jack Daniel's, and burn fossil fuels. None of the filmmakers appear to have realized that spending a fortune to make a picture that condemns excessive consumption and preaches the wise use of resources might seem a bit disingenuous. With Jeanne Tripplehorn, Tina Majorino, and Dennis Hopper. Directed by Kevin Reynolds.—T.R. (8/7/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, 59th Street East Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and National Twin.)

Wings of Courage—The first feature film to be made in Imax 3-D has to be watched through a special headset (satisfyingly chunky) and lasts forty minutes (gratifyingly short). Craig Sheffer plays a pilot in 1930 hired to fly mail across the Andes while his wife (Elizabeth McGovern) sits at home feel-

At Cinema Village, Brigitte Lin in "The Bride with White Hair II."

TIM BOWER



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ing worried. Instead of rethinking the shape of the drama to suit the format, the director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, has taken a small, simplistic plot, filled a couple of lonely roles with flat performers, and marooned them in the midst of a spectacle that is not so much a movie as a demonstration. With Val Kilmer and Tom Hulce.—A.L. (4/24/95) (Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

AN AWFULLY BIG ADVENTURE: Cinema 3. . . . **BATMAN FOREVER** (reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CASPER:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FORGET PARIS** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FRENCH KISS** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE INCREDIBLY TRUE ADVENTURE OF TWO GIRLS IN LOVE:** Quad Cinema. . . . **MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS: THE MOVIE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **PRIEST** (3/27/95): Worldwide Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St., between 8th and 9th Aves. (504-0960).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy I, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

At the Walter Reade Theatre, Tyrone Power in "Diplomatic Courier."

PHOTOFEST

Belle de Jour (1967)—Luis Buñuel was in his late sixties when he made this icy, bracingly unwholesome film about the secret life of an elegant Parisian bourgeoise. Séverine (Catherine Deneuve), who is frigid with her handsome and considerate husband (Jean Sorel), spends her afternoons as a prostitute in a discreet, upscale brothel. The movie, adapted by Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière from a popular novel by Joseph Kessel, is a pristine example of the great filmmaker's serenely outrageous late style. In this picture, desire has a de-luxe blandness that's both mysterious and deeply, unnervingly funny. In French.—T.R. (Village East Cinemas and Paris.)

Born Yesterday (1950)—Judy Holliday's classic portrait of the dumb blonde—brassy, vacuous Billie Dawn. Broderick Crawford plays the man who "keeps" her—a junkman lately become "a dealer in scrap metal" in the world of cartels. Afraid that Billie will disgrace him in Washington, he hires a newspaperman, William Holden, to make Billie more "couth." Unfortunately, both for the junkman and the picture, the journalist reforms Billie, and as she gains in virtue she diminishes in interest. The second half is pretty dreary: the movie, like the Garson Kanin hit play that it's based on, turns into a civics lesson. Broderick Crawford is too heavy and mean to be funny, and Holden's role is colorless. But you'll remember the early, acquisitive Billie with her truculent voice and glassy eyes, and her gin-rummy game. Directed by George Cukor, who's not in top form; the movie is visually dead. The play was adapted (insufficiently) by Albert Mannheimer. (Judy Holliday had played the role on Broadway; her inflections are so set that there's not much surprise left in her performance.)—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 2.)

The Circus (1928)—The Tramp becomes a clown and learns he can't be funny on demand in Charlie Chaplin's tribute to the ritualized comedy of the ring. The circus would seem to be a dream setting for a comic artist, and Chaplin's movie is wonderful when he plays with props and animals: his fun-house chase is a classic, and his haywire high-wire routine provokes the same lighter-than-air giddiness that kids feel when they see "Peter Pan." But Chaplin doesn't link the Tramp effectively with the other circus acts. What's worse, the movie is held together by some limp melodrama involving the show's star equestrienne and her cruel father, the circus owner; the Tramp's relations with the girl are pathetic in an offhand, negligible way. Still, Chaplin devises great set pieces and astonishing expressions of childlike psychology: stuck in a cage with a sleeping lion, he tries to quiet a barking dog by sticking a finger in each of his own ears.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Sept. 2-3.)

The Deadly Affair (1967)—An electric poignancy permeates this adaptation of John le Carré's novella "Call for the Dead." Its prime source is James Mason's performance as a British agent who cracks the mystery of a Foreign Service official's apparent suicide. In the role of le Carré's spy George Smiley, renamed Charles Dobbs for the movie, Mason does a middle-aged variation on the odd men out he played for Carol Reed in the first decade of his stardom. Life keeps letting Dobbs down: his adored wife (Harriet Andersson) has serial affairs, his work has lost its honor. Mason grounds the character's disappointment and concealed strength in his weathered features and brushed-fur voice; everything about him says "bloodied but unbowed." The producer-director, Sidney Lumet, surrounds Mason with a cast of peers, including Simone Signoret as the official's widow and Harry Andrews as the retired inspector who becomes Dobbs's right-hand man. Freddie Young, the cinematographer, gives the film an aptly brooding, almost decolorized look; Paul Dehn wrote the taut script. This is one of the best of Lumet's thirty-nine movies.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Sept. 2 and 4.)

The Friends of Eddie Coyle (1973)—Boston Irish crooks and cops. Robert Mitchum is the aging hood, Eddie Coyle, who is slipping a little information to a smart, treacherous narcotics officer (Richard Jordan), in order to stay out of jail. Peter Boyle, a bartender, handles murder contracts and ruthlessly plays all sides against each other. Based on the novel by George V. Higgins, former assistant attorney general in Massachusetts, this movie should be better; the plot and the dialogue are first-rate. The elements are all there, and Mitchum, looking appropriately square-headed, tries hard and has some good scenes. But you get the impression that the dialogue is moving faster than the action. Probably this picture, directed by the English Peter Yates, needed an American director with an instinctive feeling for the milieu; the movie is shallow and a little mechanical, with noise and loud music used to build up excitement. The police and the gangsters have no roots, and intertwined roots are what the story is meant to be about. Jordan, acting chillingly pleasant, gives the most effective performance, and Steven Keats, as a dealer in guns, gives the showiest one.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 3.)

Long Day's Journey Into Night (1962)—This portrait of the artist as an Irish-American has the worst American failings: it's obvious, sprawling, yet crabbed. But if you respond at all, you may go all the way to exaltation. Perhaps just because of its naked familiarity, its grinding, ludicrous wrestling with expressiveness, "Journey" is, at last, an American family classic; the usual embarrassments are transcended, and the family theme is raised to mythic heights. This is the best film ever made from an O'Neill play (and it's O'Neill's greatest play). Katharine Hepburn, Ralph Richardson, Jason Robards, Jr., and Dean Stockwell are the quartet. Hepburn's transitions here—the way she can look eighteen or eighty at will—seem iridescent. She surpasses herself: the most beautiful screen comedienne of the thirties and forties becomes our greatest tragedienne. Sidney Lumet directed.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 5.)

Winterset (1936)—Maxwell Anderson's most famous verse drama—a blend of "Romeo and Juliet" and the Sacco-Vanzetti case—was widely held to be the supremely eloquent last word on the unconquerable soul of man. Burgess Meredith, who mastered the cadences for Broadway, made his first screen appearance as Mio, giving fine voice and excellent interpretation to the soaring banalities that one might—in a romantic mood—mistake for poetry. Even with Anderson's poetics slightly trimmed by the adaptor, Anthony Veiller, the play is still in a grand manner that just won't do on the screen. But there are fine moments in the performances, and there's something childishly touching in the florid dramatic effects. With Edward Ellis as Judge Gaunt, Margo as Miriamne, Eduardo Ciannelli as Trock Estrella, Stanley Ridges as Shadow, Maurice Moscovitch as Esdras, Paul Guilfoyle as Garth Esdras. It's a clue to Anderson's popularity at the time that these actors have been forever identified with the characters they play here.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 3.)

The Yakuza (1975)—An attempt to sell a romantic view of gangsterism in an exotic setting. The yakuza are Japanese mobsters, and one of the items in their "code" is that you can show penitence for an offense against the mob chieftain by slicing off your little finger and presenting it to him. Robert Mitchum plays an American private eye who goes to Japan to rescue an American girl kidnapped by yakuza; he enlists the aid of a "retired" yakuza, a master teacher of swordsmanship (Takakura Ken, or, if you prefer, Ken Takakura), and they fight side by side, the gun and the sword. At the end, Mitchum realizes that he has offended the swordsman and commits his act of penance. This is a swaggeringly meretricious fairy tale, overloaded with exposition, and solemn when it means to be Orientally inscrutable. Richard Jordan, as Mitchum's bodyguard, gives the film its only fresh, unexpected moments. The director, Sydney Pollack, doesn't seem to understand how action-film mechanisms operate. The script, by Paul Schrader, from Leonard Schrader's story, was given a rewrite by Robert Towne.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 3.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)—"Blackboard Jungle" (1955, Richard Brooks), with Glenn Ford, Anne Francis, and Louis Calhern.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Through Aug. 31: "Rosemary's Baby" (1968, Roman Polanski), with Mia Farrow, John Cassavetes, and Ruth Gordon. . . . ¶ Sept. 1-2: "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Robert Aldrich), with Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, and Victor Buono. . . . ¶ Sept. 3-4: "Dead Ringer" (1964, Paul Henreid), with Davis, and "Die! Die! My Darling!" (1965, Silvio Narizzano), with Tallulah Bankhead. . . . ¶ Sept. 5: Cartoons by Tex Avery, featuring Red Hot Riding Hood.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—The 1995 Festival Hong Kong; all the films are in Cantonese, with English and Chinese subtitles. Aug. 30: "City on Fire" (1987, Ringo Lam), with Chow Yun-fat and Danny Lee. . . . Aug. 31 and Sept. 4: "Executioners" (1994, Johnny To), with Michelle Khan, Maggie Cheung, and Anita Mui. . . . Sept. 1: "The New Legend of Shaolin" (1994, Wong Jing), with Jet Li and Tse Miu. . . . Sept. 2: "Once Upon a Time in China V" (1994, Tsui Hark), with Zhao Wen-zhou and Rosamund Kwan. . . . Sept. 3: "The Bride with White Hair II" (1994, Ronnie Yu and David Wu), with Leslie Cheung and Brigitte Lin. . . . Sept. 5: "Butterfly Lovers" (1994, Hark), with Nicky Wu and Charlie Young.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films made from Broadway plays. Aug. 31 at 2:30: "Larceny, Inc." (1942, Lloyd Bacon). . . . Aug. 31 at 6 and Sept. 3 at 3: "Key Largo" (1948, John Huston), with Humphrey Bogart. . . . Aug. 31 at 8 and Sept. 3 at 5: "The Night of the Iguana" (1964, Huston), with Richard Burton. . . . Sept. 1 at 2:30 and Sept. 5 at 1: "The Letter" (1929, Jean De Limur), with Jeanne Eagels and Herbert Marshall. . . . Sept. 1 at 6 and Sept. 4 at 1: "The Silver Cord" (1933, John Cromwell), with Irene Dunne and Joel McCrea. . . . Sept. 1 at 8 and Sept. 5 at 3: "The Circle" (1925, Frank Borzage) and "Strictly Unconventional" (1930, David Burton). . . . Sept. 2 at 1: "Rain" (1932, Lewis Milestone), with Joan Crawford. . . . Sept. 2 at 3: "Our Betters" (1933, George Cukor). . . . Sept. 2 at 5: "Born Yesterday" (†). . . . Sept. 3 at 1: "Winterset" (†). . . . Sept. 4 at 3: "The Cat and the Canary" (1927, Paul Leni). . . . Sept. 4 at 6: "Dead End" (1937, William Wyler), with Sylvia Sidney, McCrea, and Bogart. . . . Sept. 5 at 6: "Long Day's Journey Into Night" (†).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Aug. 30 at 2, 6, and 9:30: "Background to Danger" (1943, Raoul Walsh). . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 3:45 and 7:40: "Diplomatic Courier" (1952, Henry Hathaway), with Tyrone Power. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 2, 5:30, and 9 and Sept. 1 at 3:15 and 6:45: "State Secret" (1950, Sidney Gilliat). . . . Aug. 31 at 4:15 and 7:45 and Sept. 1 at 2, 5:30, and 9: "Secrets of the French Police" (1932, Edward Sutherland). . . . Sept. 2 at 4 and 8:30 and Sept. 4 at 2 and 6:20: "The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover" (1977, Larry Cohen), with Broderick Crawford. . . . Sept. 2 at 6:15 and Sept. 4 at 4:15 and 8:40: "The Deadly Affair" (†). . . . Sept. 3 at 4 and 8:15 and Sept. 5 at 2 and 6:30: "Three Days of the Condor" (1975, Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford. . . . Sept. 3 at 6:15 and Sept. 5 at 4:15 and 8:45: "The Ipcress File" (1965, Sidney J. Furie), with Michael Caine. . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Sept. 2-3 at 2: "The Circus" (†).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Television shows by the team of William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. Through Sept. 3: "Josie and the Pussycats," "Snagglepuss," and "Peter Potamus."

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A program of short films featuring the Three Stooges. Aug. 30-Sept. 1 and Sept. 5-8 at 1 and 2:30: "Dizzy Doctors" (1937), "Dizzy Detectives" (1943), and "From Nurse to Worse" (1940). . . . ¶ A series of films starring Robert Mitchum. Sept. 2 at 2: "Secret Ceremony" (1968, Joseph Losey). . . . Sept. 2 at 4:30: "Macao" (1952, Josef von Sternberg). . . . Sept. 3 at 2: "The Friends of Eddie Coyle" (†). . . . Sept. 3 at 4: "The Yakuza" (†).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films. On Sept. 3 at 7, the feature will be "The Women" (1939, George Cukor).

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes and coming attractions. The feature on Sept. 4 will be "Barefoot in the Park" (1967, Gene Saks), with Jane Fonda and Robert Redford. (Rain date is the following night.)

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THE
NEW YORKER

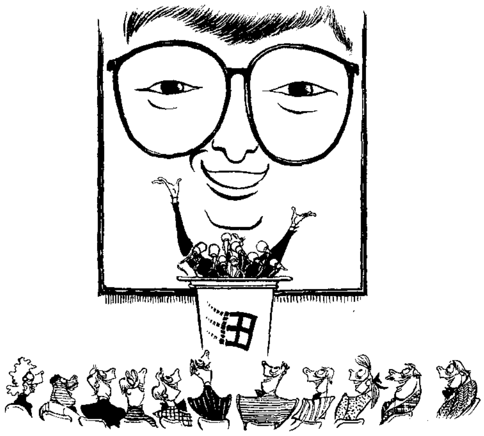
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

ONWARD, WINDOWS SOLDIERS

“We are going to extend and build on the Internet. . . . Our products are just a platform. . . . Not just the productivity of individuals but the productivity of groups. . . . Our goal is to scale up as high as anything scales up.”

These words, you figure, must belong to Microsoft, and they do—to Steve Ballmer, Microsoft’s executive vice-president, the charismatic, ministerial front man for Bill Gates, its brilliant, reclusive philosopher-king. Ballmer is a tall, sharp-eyed, heavy-browed, gleaming-pated figure, precisely the sort of stark, Barry Dilleresque visionary one has come to count on in the digital nineties. At nine o’clock on a recent momentous August morning, Ballmer stood on the podium of the New York Grand Hyatt’s Main Ballroom to deliver the keynote address of the Windows Developers Forum, a one-day seminar for some two thousand of the countless independent software developers who create applications for Microsoft’s Windows family of operating systems, which run most of the personal computers on the planet.

Ballmer whipped up the troops with practiced flair, his address comprising equal parts religious revival and military triumphalism, his hands gesticulating avidly as his baritone boomed across the crowd. His euphoria was justified. The morning papers had just announced the Justice Department’s decision to put off investigating Microsoft’s plan to bundle its on-line service with its new operating system, Windows 95, which was released last week. Windows 95 is the kind of once-a-decade product launch that dazzles by sheer audacity of ambition. Two million lines of code. Seventy-five million man-hours of testing. Two hundred million dollars spent on marketing, with the end not yet in sight. By this autumn, Ballmer assured the breathless ballroom throng, Windows 95 will live in the computers of “from fifteen to twenty per cent of a hundred million PC users” and will come “pre-installed on every new home computer.” He took a breath, then spoke slowly and clearly. Starting this fall, “you will see nothing but Win 95 machines.”



Translation: A fortune awaits those who are talented enough to grab it. “I encourage all of you to understand and participate in our M.S.D.N. [Microsoft Developer Network] program,” Ballmer urged, that sly “understand” subtly underscoring the primal truth of Microsoft life, which is that no matter how smart you are you’re dumber than Bill. It is through such subtextual Randian cues toward self-improvement that Microsoft exhorts individuals to advance toward the collective’s greater glory. The process isn’t merely dynamic—it’s organic. Life finds a way. Weeds sprout in concrete. Fish gasp onto dry land. Microsoft gets larger. You will see nothing but Win 95 machines.

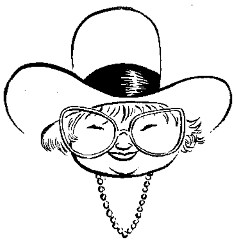
After Ballmer’s stem-winder came a series of developers’ presentations, delivered by pep-rally techies wearing deep-blue polo shirts with the Microsoft logo inscribed in small white letters over one breast: environmental subsystems, RISC-based architecture, thread contexts, motion blur . . . blah blah blah.

Outside the ballroom, a few slacking conference attendees hung around performing the three essential computer-industry-conference-attendee tasks: networking, frowning over institutional coffee, and punching calling-card numbers into pay phones while uncomfortably balancing glowing laptops on their laps. Yes, a giddy, clean-cut graphics programmer named Randy said, Win 95 is going to be “massive, totally massive. It’s going to take the world by storm.” No, he’d never met Bill Gates, but he liked him. And yes, there might be some resistance to Windows 95—at least, at first. “Most people are still scared of using computers,” he conceded, with a shrug. “They’re invading every aspect of life nowadays.”

Off in a corner, Ballmer dazzled a CNBC News reporter with a few verses of invading-every-aspect-of-life-nowadays Infobahn rap. “Every grocery store is going to put up its own Web site,” he said. “So you can order groceries directly.” He added reassuringly, “Still, I don’t see everybody turning into PC potatoes.”

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

A BATTALION OF BELLAS



Bella Abzug

“The world is suffering a global nervous breakdown,” Bella Abzug barks. You may remember Abzug as the human bullhorn of the nineteen-sixties and seventies: congresswoman, feminist at the barricades, and living symbol of the brassiness and bravado of her native New York. Now, at seventy-five, she has traded in the bullhorn for a fax machine and has gone international. As co-founder of the Women’s Environment & Development Organization, Abzug organizes women around such global issues as economic development and access to political power. Late last week, she left for the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, where she plans to hold the world’s feet to the fire on pretty much every issue you can think of.

Though not quite the volcanic force she once was, Abzug is still a seriously blunt instrument. On a recent afternoon, she was sitting in her crowded midtown office wearing a three-piece purple silk suit, purple platform shoes, and a straw hat—the signature Abzug accessory—with a parrot-green brim and a purple crown. A purple crystal dangled from a chain around her neck. “It’s supposed to have calming qualities,” she said with a derisive laugh. Serenity is not in her repertoire.

At the moment, Abzug was exercised over suggestions that Hillary Clinton ought not to attend the Beijing conference, because the Administration was at odds with China over human-rights issues. (The Chinese had not yet released Harry Wu.) “It’s political!” she rasped, throwing out her hands in the classic New York go-soak-your-head gesture. “She’s not there on a diplomatic mission. She’s there to join women and their government delegations to see what they can do to improve the conditions of women and children, which she’s been working on all her life.” Reminded that the President’s own Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, had expressed concern about the First Lady’s plans, Abzug rolled her eyes beneath a cloud of gray hair and said, “He’s a fuddy-duddy. He doesn’t get it.”

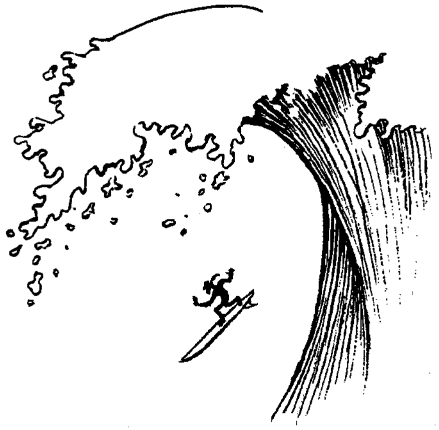
Lining a narrow corridor outside Abzug’s office were boxes of literature waiting to be shipped off to Beijing. WEDO, as her group is called, will be playing a central role for the thirty-five thousand members of nongovernmental organizations expected to converge on the conference. “We’ve had a lot of words on equality,” Abzug says. “Now we want the music, which is action.” WEDO will be coördinating strategy among the N.G.O.s and convening a daily Women’s Linkage Caucus; a giant scoreboard will list the dozen planks in the momentous-sounding Plan of Action the conference is to adopt, and will chart the specific commitments made by various nations. Abzug’s faith that nations will make serious efforts to eradicate poverty or restrain “corporate greed” or cut defense spending just because they’ve pledged to do so seems almost touching, but she insists that words publicly uttered take on a real moral force. And women, she says, “are being mobilized by these meetings like crazy, all over the world.”

Bella Abzug has been Bella Abzug for so many years now that she has apparently become not only an icon but an international brand name. At a recent meeting, she reports, “this young woman came in and said, ‘Hi, I’m the Bella Abzug of Mongolia.’ ” WEDO itself represents a convening of such Bellas-in-training. After she finished talking, Abzug heaved herself to her feet and proudly introduced her colleagues, who included young women from Louisiana, Tanzania, Bangladesh, India, Korea, and Turkey. They represented the future; but Abzug also carries her past with her. WEDO’s other co-founder is Mim Kelber, a friend of hers from Hunter College, and one of the volunteers is Eva Lederman, who was Abzug’s high-school gym teacher, and who, at seventy-nine, remains dauntingly trim. Bella, she reports, was a terrific dancer.

THE FELIX FACTOR

Peter Spacek was kayaking from Amagansett to Montauk, trolling for bluefish, when he felt the first pulse. This was on Sunday, August 13th, before the Hamptons burned. The sea was placid and the wind light, but every twenty minutes a set of substantial waves would suddenly appear, breaking on an outside sandbar. “It seemed premature,” Spacek said later. “Felix hadn’t even passed Bermuda. But those waves were obviously long-distance. It had to be the hurricane.”

While beachfront homeowners shuddered, Spacek rejoiced, because he has rented a place in Montauk for thirteen summers for a specific oceanographic reason. A freelance illustrator who lives the rest of the year in Tribeca, he is, in a parallel universe, a serious surfer, and Montauk, where the long, flat, sandy, straight south shore of Long Island gnarls into cliffs, rocky coves, and boulder-strewn points for a few miles at its eastern tip, gets some of the most serious surf on the East Coast. That’s not necessarily saying much. Spacek grew up in California, and paid his big-wave dues in Hawaii, next to which the East Coast is a very tame cat. But Hurricane Felix held exceptionally violent promise.



The first couple of days of the swell were nice and beefy. Beaches closed from Florida to Maine; Montauk raged. On Day Three, hotshot strangers from New Jersey and Rhode Island started showing up at Montauk Point, where a deepwater break off the lighthouse was one of the few spots still ridable. Spacek was out there, surfing hard. He was a strange representative of the home team, though. Tall, pale-eyed, goateed, ponytailed, and droll, he has a surfing style—fast, fluid, reggae-inflected—that for aficionados evokes the Hawaiian Outer Islands circa 1975. (He in fact lived on Kauai in 1975.) Ubiquitous as he is along the Montauk coast in summer, he has kept his distance from the local surf scene, preferring to hike and fish and surf alone or with a friend, a fellow-illustrator named Alison Seiffer. Still, as the surf grew even bigger on Day Four, and a thick, nasty fog rolled in, and the surfboards started breaking in half at Montauk

Point, there he was, flashing through the pit on two-story waves and holding up his end of Montauk's honor. That night, he admitted, "This was the first time I've felt fear in the water here. Luckily, I have to work tomorrow."

Day Five—Thursday, August 17th—was the biggest of the swell. Spacek did a few drawings, faxed them off, and then had Seiffer drive him to a trailhead along the Old Montauk Highway. "I didn't want to deal with the crowd at the Point," he said. "Ha." He hiked through the bush for a mile or so, bound for a remote reef break known as Ranch. "The first wave I saw from the trail was the biggest wave I've ever seen on the East Coast," he said. Days later, his voice was still edged with awe. "There was nobody around, and I didn't think I had a chance of making it out—the bigger waves were breaking across the whole bay—but I found myself automatically changing into my wetsuit, and just kind of laughing about it. Like 'What am I *doing*?' There was no way my board was big enough for those waves." To his horror, he managed to slip between the rushing walls of foam and reach clear blue water. "I thought I was far enough out. I was a long way from shore. But then this mega-set came, just this mammoth, dark-faced thing feathering way, way out there. I'd never seen anything like it outside Hawaii. I didn't have a chance of getting over it."

Spacek dived under two monster waves. His ankle leash held, so he still

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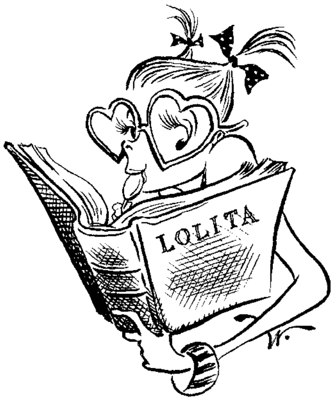
THE BOOK ON LOLITA

News of the new movie version of "Lolita," starring Jeremy Irons as Humbert Humbert, and about to begin filming in North Carolina, has caused me to recall my own odd involvement with the book, in the months before Vladimir Nabokov's masterpiece was first published in the United States. Part of the myth surrounding the novel is the notion that Bennett Cerf, the co-owner of Random House, was one of the group of hapless publishers (others being Douglas Black of Doubleday, Roger Straus of Farrar, Straus and Young, and Max Schuster) who so lacked foresight, or were so timid in the face of "Lolita" 's ostensibly salacious subject matter, that they missed out on one of the great publishing coups of modern times. But Cerf, at least, has to be excused from this group, since his failure to publish the book was not one of either will or vision but was due to his being hamstrung by a corporate decree of his own devising.

I first read "Lolita" in 1957, in the original Olympia Press edition, published in Paris by Maurice Girodias; the twin green volumes had been smuggled through New York customs by a friend of mine, the theatrical producer Lewis Allen. That "Lolita" was published by the firm that also brought out such incandescent titles as "White Thighs," "With Open Mouth," and "The Sexual Life of Robinson Crusoe" helped create a notoriety that Nabokov rightly deplored but which did in fact contribute to the widespread impression that the novel was unfit to be read by decent Americans. Publishers all over New York shunned the work. The book, of course, is a sidesplitting and heartbreaking triumph, and entirely filth free; Allen and I were so smitten by Humbert Humbert's sublime obsession that we toyed with the idea of trying to persuade Nabokov to let us publish "Lolita" in a private edition, and to hell with the obscenity laws. But financial problems sent me instead to Bennett Cerf, who had recently become my publisher.

Not long before this, Bennett had named a new editor-in-chief, Hiram Haydn. A sophisticated and rather scholarly man, Haydn had brought me along from Bobbs-Merrill, where he had edited my first novel, "Lie Down in Darkness," and where he had fought valiantly and more or less successfully against the company bluenoses, based in the Indianapolis home office, who had objected to my fairly tame sexual tableaux and occasionally crude language. Cerf greatly respected Haydn. For the first time during his presidency of Random House, Bennett had bestowed on an editor absolute autonomy, and so I was reasonably certain that, given Haydn's broadmindedness, "Lolita" would be a shoo-in for prompt and enthusiastic publication, even though I had had early qualms about Bennett. When I handed him the two volumes, he fingered them with gingerly distaste, shook his head, and murmured something like "Well, I don't know . . . dirty books."

A week or so later, warm with pleasure and anticipation, I marched into Haydn's office in the old Villard mansion, on Madison Avenue. Before I could utter a word, Hiram rose from his desk, his face actually blue with rage. "That loathsome novel will be published over my dead body!" he roared. Dumbfounded, I asked him what in God's name had caused him to react this way to such a splendid literary achievement. He ranted and shouted, and when I asked him to explain, to *please* explain, the reason for his fury he replied that I, Bill Styron, knew full well that he, Hiram Haydn, had a daughter the age of the victim of Humbert Humbert's disgusting lust, and that when my own daughter was that age perhaps I'd understand the hatred a man might feel for "Lolita." For some reason, I was not angry with Hiram. It was an outburst that revealed the power of art's sometimes terrifying menace.



I fled to the office next door, where Bennett, his pipe propped against his cheek, was gazing desolately into the distance. "That novel is a masterpiece," he said, in a choked voice, "but I can't budge the man. He said if I overruled him he'd quit." He paused, then added, "What a *wonderful* book!" His eyes had the look of one who had divined the wretched future: "Lolita" published by some second-rate outfit like Putnam; ecstatic reviews; week after week at the top of the best-seller list; and any new works of Vladimir Nabokov forever lost to Random House.

—William Styron

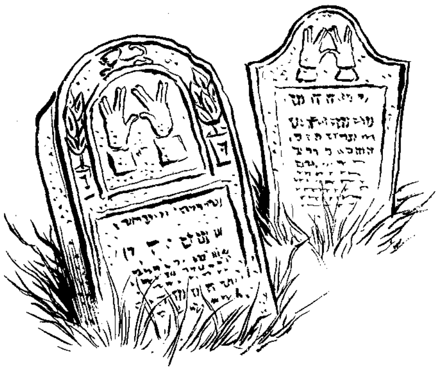
had his board with him. But he was now out of breath, and battling panic. "I kept telling myself that I had survived worse situations, like getting carried out to sea at Sunset"—a fearsome Hawaiian big-wave break—"by a huge rip on a huge day just as it was getting dark." He caught a wave and rode it cleanly and felt calmer. But then he noticed that a current was carrying him west, toward a rock reef where giant waves were breaking with lethal force. He paddled east as hard as he could for fifteen minutes and made no progress. The current was too powerful. Then he got hit by another monster. His leash held again. But his strength was ebbing badly. Finally, he caught a midsize wave and rode it all the way through the rocks to shore.

"I walked home along the coast," he said. "The sun was setting, and it was incredibly pleasant just being on dry land. At one point, I turned inland and came to a pasture with a bunch of horses in it. They all turned and stared at my board. Then, suddenly, they started galloping straight at me. They stopped just a couple of yards away, and one horse came up, very tentatively, and smelled me and my board and my wetsuit. After he was finished, all the other horses had to do it, one by one. It must have been the seawater, or just something about a human being with a horizontal bar."

OY, SPOCK

"THE other day, a fellow told me how he'd been taking his daughter on a visit through an old Jewish cemetery in Poland," Leonard Nimoy, the human incarnation of the pointy-eared Vulcan Mr. Spock on the old "Star Trek" television series, was commenting recently. "They'd come upon a particular tombstone that featured an image of two hands sheltering a candle, their fingers splayed out in the traditional sign of blessing—with the thumb and its adjacent two fingers to one side, the other two fingers to the other, in a kind of V. At which point, his daughter asked him, 'How come the hands are saying "Live long and prosper"?' The funny thing is"—Nimoy laughed—"the girl got it exactly right."

Nimoy has been spending a lot of time lately thinking about his Vulcan roots: his forthcoming memoir, "I Am Spock," will be published in October. He's also been spending a lot of time thinking about his Jewish roots, in part because of his involvement, as the host, with a thirteen-part radio series called "Jewish Short Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond," airing this summer and fall over National Public Radio. He recalled going to temple as a young boy, in the melting-pot "urban ghetto" of Boston's West End. The most impressive moment, he said, regularly came when the Kohanim—the half-dozen or so representatives of the priestly tribe—approached the raised stage in the front of the congregation and formed a semicircle with their large shawls draped over their heads and extended arms, and their hands outspread in that four-fingered V configuration. "It was a very loaded moment," Nimoy explained. "You weren't supposed to look as they began chanting, for it was said that at that moment the Shekhinah, the holy presence of God, entered the sanctuary, and that this spirit was so powerful, so beautiful that if you saw it you'd die. Being an eight-year-old, of course I peeked, and the sheer theatricality of the occasion indeed made a lasting impression."



AFTER a brief pause, Nimoy went on. "Years later, as I was creating the Spock character—and I was not insensitive to the Jewish resonances of this eternally wandering exile, this alien among an otherwise homogeneous crew—I was having to fashion his whole Vulcan world as if from scratch, and one of the things I kept keying on was this notion of a distinctly hand-oriented society: the mind-meld, the neck-pinch, and so forth. And in one of the early episodes there came a moment when a salutation of some sort was called for, and it all came back to me like that—the four-fingered V sign from my youth. That became the gesture for 'Live long and prosper.' "

"Jewish Short Stories" was directed by Joan Micklin Silver and features the likes of Alan Alda, Lauren Bacall, Claire Bloom, and Walter Matthau, reading authors ranging from Sholom Aleichem and Isaac Babel through Isaac Bashevis Singer, Philip Roth, and Grace Paley. "It's been wonderful to be able to get back into that culture," Nimoy said. "The stories and the voices are so incredibly rich and vivid and varied, although it's of course a bit ironic that we've found it necessary to do this series of Yiddish stories in English."

This comment in turn got Nimoy to reminiscing about his early days as an acting student. He'd gone out to California to study at the Pasadena Playhouse, but he'd occasionally scrape up a little pocket change by taking on bit juvenile parts in productions of visiting East Coast Yiddish companies at the local Wilshire Ebell Theatre. "That's how I got to meet the great Maurice Schwartz, one of the most phenomenal stage presences there ever was," Nimoy said. "When he presented his Yiddish 'King Lear,' the effect was so overpowering that the audience would go wild, demanding one curtain call after another. Finally, he'd calm the crowd, gesturing, and then he'd promise, 'Next year, we do it in the English version!' "

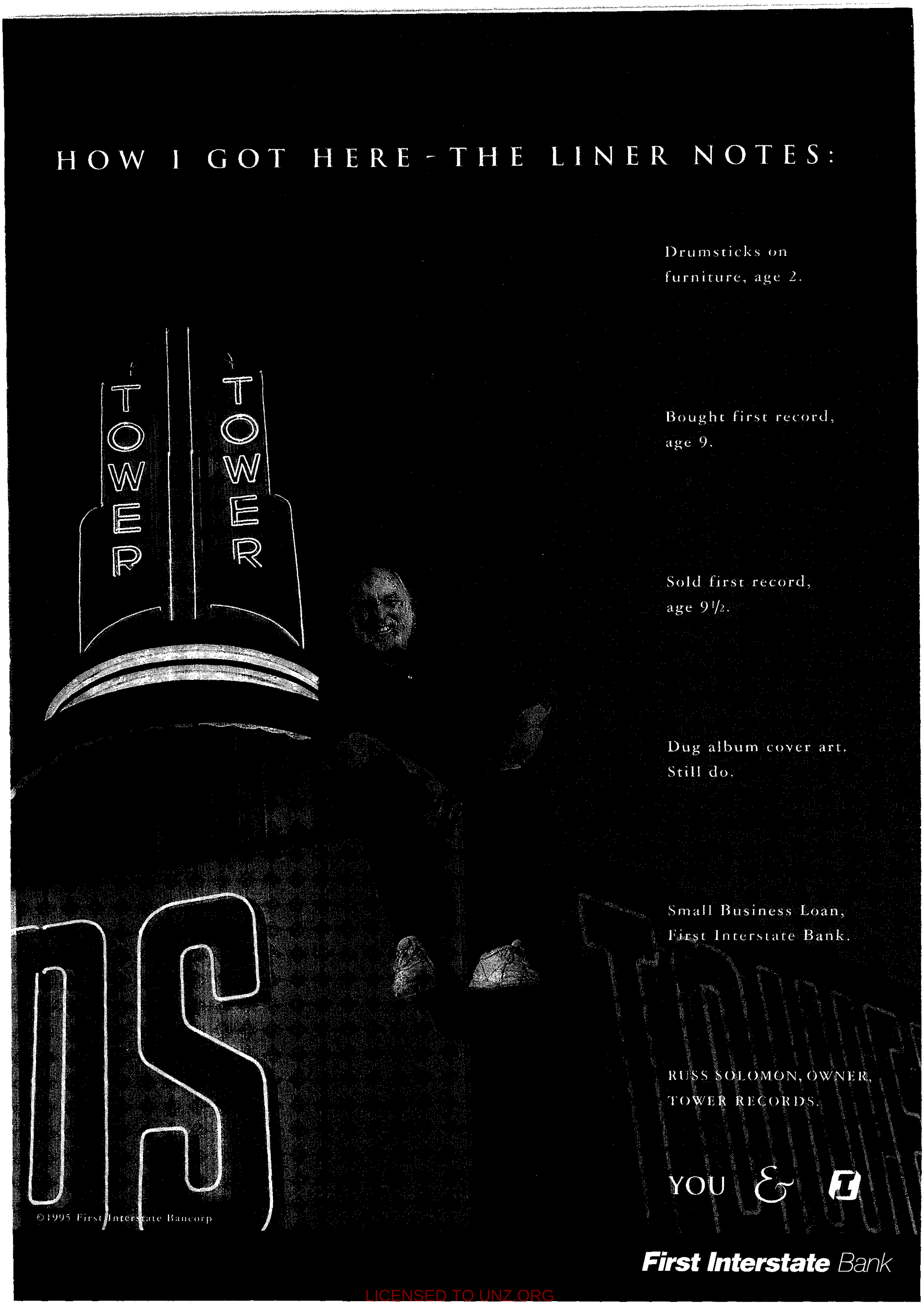
"Well," Nimoy concluded, "that's a little how I feel now about this radio series. It's great and all, but maybe next year we can do it in the Yiddish version."

FLOWER POWER

THE window boxes outside the fourth-floor apartment of a building on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Sixteenth Street are particularly radiant this summer. Shooting up through the petunias and the love-lies-bleeding is a row of sunflowers almost as tall as the ones now yellowing the Nebraska plains. Their bright heads bow slightly, as if they were keeping tabs on who goes into the Hollywood Restaurant, below.

Richard Mitchell, a photographer who lives in the cool of the sunflowers' leafy shade, says that they sprouted unexpectedly. "My roommate and I have a parrot," he explains. "Over the winter, we dumped all the birdseed she didn't eat into the flower boxes. The sunflowers just came up on their own." ♦

This week's contributors: Michael Krantz, James Traub, William Finnegan, Lawrence Weschler, Lauren MacIntyre.



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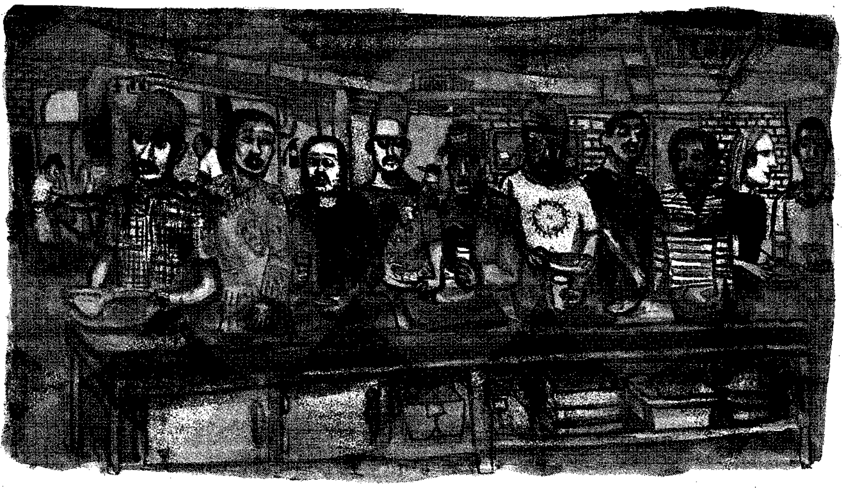
STREET FIGHT

Everyone loved the businessmen who cleaned up midtown until it was reported that they used goons against the homeless. But who really got the bum's rush?

BY JAMES TRAUB



GARY PANTER

TEN years ago, the area around Grand Central Terminal, in the heart of New York City, was a dismal symbol of urban decline and a constant reminder of the nonchalance toward public life that separates New York from the world's other great cities. Garbage flowed over the top of trash bins and down onto the sidewalk; graffiti stained the walls; purse snatchings were routine. The only reason to walk into Bryant Park, a couple of blocks down the street, was to buy loose joints. And as many as a thousand homeless people—probably the largest concentration in the city, or even the country—panhandled on the streets and often slept in the terminal. Hundreds lined up on Vanderbilt Avenue every evening to receive sandwiches. I used to volunteer in that line, and what I recall is the stale smell of the food and the people, the shoving and the occasional fights, the derisive or frightened stares of commuters hurrying to the station. It all seemed so futile, and so demeaning.

That was then. If you spend much time around Grand Central now, you'll notice workers in white uniforms—mostly young black men—emptying garbage cans, sweeping the sidewalks, putting a fresh coat of paint on crosswalks and street lights. The shirts say "Grand Central Partnership," as do newspaper boxes and trash baskets and the barricades marking areas slated for repairs. The Partnership is a group of local businessmen, organized into what is known as a business-improvement district, or BID, and since 1985 it has been spending millions of dollars a year to improve the neighborhood. The Partnership pays for a fifty-man security force, which has reduced crime in the area almost by half over the last decade. And there are very few homeless people living on the street. The Partnership has established a drop-in center for the homeless at an old parochial school—St. Agnes, on East Forty-fourth Street. St. Agnes offers food and a place to sleep—on plastic chairs, to be sure—and also counselling, job-readiness training, and housing placement. One evening recently, I sat in the basement cafeteria and watched about two hundred homeless people file in, pick up trays of baked chicken, rice, and creamed corn, and sit down at tables for a quiet meal. The contrast with Vanderbilt Avenue was stupefying. Dallas McCray, a staff member who was formerly homeless herself, surveyed the room with a smile and said, "Notice how violent it is?"

It was a joke, but a joke with a barb. In April, the *Times* reported that "goon squads" operating within the Partnership's homeless-outreach program "threatened, bullied and attacked homeless people to force them from doorways, bank vestibules, plazas and sidewalks all over Manhattan." Former employees alleged that the head of outreach had known of and sanctioned the abusive tactics. Suddenly, the Partnership sounded less like a new vision of urban reform than like a racketeering enterprise. The Department of Housing and Urban Development withdrew a grant of five hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars; the Manhattan District Attorney's Office opened an investigation; the editorial pages issued stern warnings. Scarcely anyone rallied to the Partnership's side. In the course of its good works, it turned out, the group had trampled on toes all over town. "There are some smiles around the table," the director of another business-improvement district says.

The smiles are bound to fade soon, since the accusations threaten to discredit not only the Partnership's work but also that of other BIDs. And in New York, where urban reform is much discussed and only rarely practiced, that would constitute an even greater shame than what the Partnership is accused of.

In a speech before the Association for a Better New York this past March, House Speaker Newt Gingrich singled out the Grand Central Partnership for praise, and offered it as an instance of alternatives to "the welfare state." He described BIDs as "local, voluntary, get-together organizations," which is a rather folksy version of the truth. Unlike traditional neighborhood associations, BIDs, which are chartered by state law, have the power of mandatory taxation. Once formed by a majority vote of property owners in a given area, a BID raises the money for local improvements through a special assessment on real estate, usually around ten cents per square foot. And in New York City, where municipal government has increasingly shrunk from its traditional core functions of sanitation and security, BIDs have become almost a craze. The city now has thirty-three of them, with more applying for approval, and they have made the city cleaner, safer, and more charming. "If you believe that midtown Manhattan has improved in recent years, it's mostly attributable to the business-improvement districts," says Nicholas Fish, the chairman of Community Board 5, which spans midtown.

BIDs have often proved more effective than government in part because they can operate without bureaucracies, entrenched interests, electoral calculations, or even ideology. They offer the virtues of the private sector without the corrupting influence of the profit motive. And yet BIDs are not simply collections of citizens, as Gingrich implied. They are controlled by the property owners who finance them and largely make up their boards. The public, in effect, has to depend on the BIDs' sense of enlightened self-interest. Gretchen Dykstra, the president of the Times Square BID, says, "We control money, we get things done, and we are outside of democratic oversight and accountability."

People like Dykstra tend to be acutely sensitive to the BIDs' hybrid nature. In order to avoid any conflict, or even any appearance of conflict, between the interests of their funders and those of the public, they err on the side of modesty, refusing to venture outside their districts or to operate far from their main activities of security and sanitation. They generally don't do things they might be good at, like outreach to the homeless. "Even if you have a progressive board, as I have, its priority is to get somebody off the sidewalk, because it hurts business," Dykstra says. "The social-service agencies might say that it's not healthy for these people to live on the street, but their boss, as it were, is the homeless person." Dykstra retains a homeless organization to do her BID's outreach work.

The Partnership is a different breed of animal from the typical BID—bolder and more entrepreneurial, less preoccupied with checks and balances. It's one of only two BIDs to have floated its own bonds—the other being the 34th Street Partnership, with which it shares a chairman and a president—and it uses the proceeds of the thirty-two-million-dollar issue to make capital investments in the area around Grand Central, including new street signs and traffic lights and the installation of period street lights and pink granite handicapped-accessible curbs at corners. The BID spent two million seven hundred thousand dollars putting up floodlights to illuminate the façade of Grand Central Terminal; it plans to spend as much as

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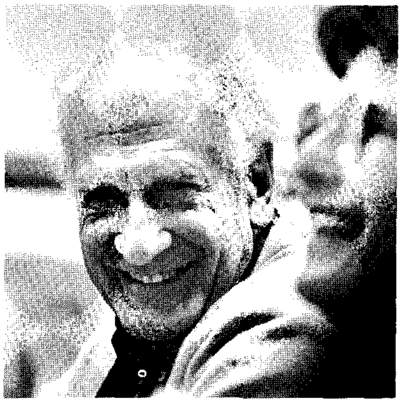

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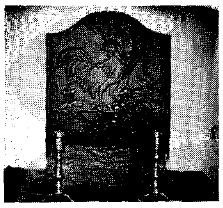

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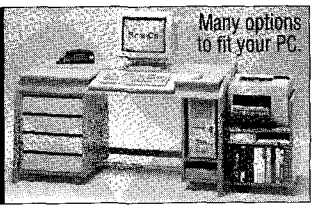

three million dollars turning an area just south of the terminal, known as Pershing Square, into a pedestrian mall and park. Peter Malkin, the chairman of the Partnership and a major real-estate figure, who, along with Harry Helmsley, controls the hundred-and-fifteen-year master lease on the Empire State Building, says grandly, "I think more has been done for the city of New York by these programs than by any other program that has been put into effect since the decline of the city as a service provider."

The Partnership hasn't hesitated to offer its advice far beyond its own boundaries. Not only has it provided homeless-outreach services in the Grand Central area but it has also contracted those services out to banks and nonprofit agencies; at one point, it even proposed a plan to clean an outer-borough highway. Dan Biederman, the Partnership's president, has shown a flair for empire building: he now heads three BIDs. He submitted proposals to two others, but both were rejected. After the organizers of the Times Square BID turned him down, he is reported to have tried to organize a counter-BID of his own (a charge that Biederman denies). This is considered profoundly unBIDlike behavior, and Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., the publisher of the *Times*, who was the founding chairman of the Times Square BID, was furious when he heard that Biederman had gone behind his back.

The Partnership is also unusual among BIDs in its indifference to democratic oversight and accountability. One board member, Mary Holloway, executive director of the Association for a Better New York, describes a typical board meeting as "You get reams of paper and everyone votes yes." Perhaps the focus on ends rather than means helps explain the Partnership's record of success; but other BIDs have proved that it is possible to be both accountable and effective. The Times Square BID, for example, has made its famously scrofulous neighborhood vastly cleaner and safer, a transformation that has clearly helped persuade companies like Disney to invest in the area. People in other BIDs routinely contrast "the Times Square model"—democratic, board-driven, carefully defined—with "the Grand Central model," which is regularly described as secretive, expansionist, and utterly dominated by its chairman and its president. Earlier this year, BID managers formed a committee on ethical standards and accountability. "The purpose is to show the community that there are BIDs out there that are very conscious and very concerned about what the public thinks," Robert Walsh, the executive director of the Fourteenth Street BID, says. The democratic process may well be inefficient, but it's dangerous to exalt effectiveness above all other goals, including the consent of the governed. "Sooner or later," one board member says, "that kind of contempt for process catches up with you."

FOR all its ambition, the Partnership apparently backed into its work with the homeless. Dan Biederman recalls that before the BID was formed David Dinkins, then the Manhattan Borough President, had insisted that it deal with the rising tide of homeless people in and around Grand Central. The Partnership leased St. Agnes and brought in a church group to provide services. The arrangement didn't work out, and in 1989 the Partnership formed its own social-services corporation. At the time, the Coalition for the Homeless was operating the sandwich line on Vanderbilt Avenue, and it agreed to move indoors to St. Agnes.

The Partnership began venturing into uncharted territory when it developed its own outreach team, whose job was to persuade the homeless to leave the streets and seek services at St. Agnes. Outreach is generally considered to be a painstaking business; avoiding harm is almost more important than doing good. Workers are extensively trained and often credentialled. A team may consist of a psychiatric nurse, a professional outreach worker, and a "peer counsellor"—a formerly homeless person who has himself overcome addiction and other problems. The members expect to spend days, or even weeks, quietly persuading a homeless person to seek services. It's hard to imagine the Partnership abiding by such modest standards, and it didn't. The BID fielded a virtual army of outreach workers, all of them former or current homeless people. "We knew this was a potentially dangerous thing," Biederman concedes. But Jeffrey Grunberg, the executive director of the Partnership's Social Services Corporation, feels strongly, even now, that the dangers have been overrated. "Our guys are as gentle as any other group try-

ELEGY FOR MY SISTER

Warm toast. Night fires. Aesop and Grimm.
An electric model of the Lipizzaner stallions
Circling each other in her darkened room.
An empty schoolyard after a morning rain,
And a figure eight traced by bicycle tires,
Over and over, without a flaw. Her vine-
Borne flowering marginalia, flowering now

In the ever-widening margins of memory.
The up-early privacy of a house at dawn:
A jigsaw puzzle, disarranged, arranging
Into evergreen leaves on a holly tree (the
Quick bird movements of her slender hands).
The window she'd look in each time
We'd pass the Home for Retarded Children.

A doll whose name changed day by day,
And an imaginary friend she called Applause.
My feeling (no doubt hopelessly tinged
With how, were she here, her looks alone
Would resist my attempts to say these things)
That all of this was already lost, even then.
The Palace of Nowhere. L'Hôtel de Dream.

—Sherod Santos

ing to reach out to very troubled people," he says. Grunberg argues that nobody can connect with the homeless as well as people who have come from the streets themselves. And he also sees work in general, and outreach work in particular, as a profound form of therapy for the homeless, even those still addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Grunberg, who is completing a dissertation in sociology, often sounds like the last holdout for cold fusion. Scarcely anyone in the field thinks he's right. "To use fresh homeless people for any purpose other than focussing on their treatment is abusing them," says Eric Roth, the executive director of the BRC Human Services Corporation, which offers psychiatric and substance-abuse treatment. Yet the low rate of success of orthodox outreach efforts argues that the traditional canons of propriety may not actually be doing much for the homeless. And since over the last six years St. Agnes has found full-time jobs for almost four hundred formerly homeless people, and permanent homes for almost six hundred, Grunberg can't be all wrong. His theories seem no worse than eccentric, and certainly not exploitative.

The Partnership really did invite trouble, though, when it agreed, in 1990, to provide outreach services for banks and neighborhood groups. I asked Biederman if the issue had been debated by the board. He said that debate hadn't seemed necessary. "If it's a more humane approach than the banks are going to take," he said, "who would be against it?" One answer would be "Everyone else in his position." The banks, after all, were signing up for an alternative security service: their ultimate objective was not to treat the homeless but to see them removed from A.T.M. vestibules. And it is a cardinal principle of outreach that you do not move the homeless against their will—not because they have a right to occupy private property (they don't) but because it defeats the purpose of getting them to seek treatment. An independent board member of the Social Services Corporation might have pointed out this elementary fact. But there was no such board member; the corporation was effectively controlled by the Partnership.

BY now, the Partnership and its accusers have splattered one another with so much mud that it has become al-

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most impossible to take anyone's credibility seriously. The Partnership has responded to the allegations of organized abuse by accusing the Coalition for the Homeless, which assiduously collected many of the charges and brought them to the attention of reporters, of conducting a vendetta. Peter Malkin and other Partnership officials have publicly repeated dubious allegations of racism and anti-Semitism on the part of a volunteer for the Coalition who says he witnessed one incident. The Coalition, on the other hand, has made the Partnership out to be some sort of appalling juggernaut, though doing that hasn't been difficult, given the BID's reputation. The two groups were at each other's throats well before the accusations surfaced. In July of 1994, the Coalition took its feeding program out of St. Agnes and back to the street. A Coalition official described St. Agnes to me as "a hellhole," rife with drug use and the threat of violence.

Where does the truth lie? There is good reason to be skeptical of the accounts in the *Times*. Two out of four former outreach workers who volunteered tales of abuse had been fired, on separate occasions, for stealing Partnership vehicles. The Partnership claims to have no record at all of one of the others. The fourth, Ernest Montgomery, who is the most credible of them, agreed to meet with me a few weeks ago in Tompkins Square Park; he now has an apartment nearby. Montgomery stands six feet four, is a former boxer, and is still in good shape at thirty-two. He had been sent out to the streets with no training, he said, and with instructions that emphasized security, not outreach. "What our job was was to keep the homeless from sleeping in the vestibules and keep them from panhandling," he said. "There was some people that we could deal with, and there was some knuckleheads. One guy pulled a razor on me; I knocked him down twenty stairs." Montgomery insisted that he had been part of a goon squad; he said that when he told Frank Schiazza, then the associate director of outreach, about these incidents, "he would smile."

Schiazza himself denies every element of Montgomery's account. He says that he always told new recruits, "If any one of you guys hurt somebody, it would really bring us down." Schiazza says that he drew a sharp line between persuasion and force, but it's easy to see how Montgomery and others might have confused the banks' objectives with those of the Partnership. In a report commissioned by the Partnership, Robert Hayes, a founder of the Coalition for the Homeless, contends that the Partnership compromised its outreach mission by its contracts with banks. Grunberg's blithe confidence in the homeless compounded the problem. Ernest Montgomery was only weeks from the streets, and was still using drugs. He and the others had been sent out into the streets with virtually no training. Perhaps outreach was good treatment for them, but that didn't mean they were ready to do it. Hayes points to instances of outreach workers panhandling bank customers, or themselves bedding down in an A.T.M. area. Hayes recommended that the Partnership hire an experienced group to conduct its outreach work, as the Times Square BID has done; and the Partnership has acquiesced.

The chief allegation against the Partnership, however, was not that it ignored a potential conflict but that it actively or tacitly encouraged a pattern of abuse. The dozen or so outreach workers I spoke with viewed the "goon squad" claim as a fabrication, and also as a grave personal insult; they saw their work in precisely the redemptive terms that Grunberg had laid out. James Lewis, who looked less like a goon than like a fourth grader on graduation day (white shirt, red tie, big glasses, black cap, gap in his front teeth), said, "Black and Sylvester"—two of the accusers—"went through the whole program with me. There was no beat they went through that I didn't monitor. If they're saying, 'We were part of a goon squad,' that means *I* was part of a goon squad. And that's a blatant lie." In his report Hayes calls the allegation of goon squads "fanciful," and adds, in a barely veiled criticism of his former colleagues at the Coalition for the Homeless, that it "reeks of demagoguery." Moreover, nearly all A.T.M.s have video cameras, yet no evidence of abuse was captured on tape. The Partnership's largest client, Chase Manhattan, has reviewed tapes from fifty A.T.M.s without finding a single untoward incident.

In addition, the theme that runs through the allegations against the outreach program—that the Social Services Corporation is too narrowly focussed on clearing the streets to bother with the legitimate concerns of the homeless—is belied by St. Agnes. Hayes gives high marks to the center's housing and employment program, and expresses something like wonderment at its "comparative serenity." Of the nine people I talked to at dinner one evening, none had seen a fight or any drug use, at least inside the building, in recent years. Ralph Thomas, a gaunt, bearded man, said that he had left his clothes on a chair during the day and found them there in the evening. After only three days of sleeping on the chairs, he had been directed to a church, and would be sleeping on a cot there that night.

After dinner, I walked outside and met a Black Muslim who goes by the name of Mustapha. A big man in a black knitted cap, Mustapha told me that over the years he had been back and forth to St. Agnes, and had been helped there with housing and detox referrals. "Even when I've messed up and turned back, they've never turned me away," Mustapha said. Frank Schiazza had offered him a job, but problems that Mustapha didn't care to specify had intervened. "I have a great deal of respect for Frank," Mustapha said. And, as if that weren't testimonial enough, he added, "I've never run across a place that's actually willing to help homeless people, like this place."

ON balance, the Partnership's programs have done a great deal more for the homeless than the Coalition's sandwiches, and possibly its advocacy. One afternoon, I stood outside of St. Agnes and listened to Jeffrey Grunberg deliver a passionate, buttonholing defense of his work. Finally, he cried out, "I *know* our intentions are good, and we're trying our best to help a lot of people." Grunberg couldn't fathom why the world wouldn't credit his good intentions. But the Partnership has a perverse gift for making its intentions look worse than they are—a consequence, perhaps, of its outsized pride in its own benevolence. And now it's paying the price of its high-handedness—in lost HUD funding and, more lastingly, in lost prestige.

In retrospect, the Partnership can be seen to have performed an indispensable function: It has tested the limits of a powerful new idea. It has served as both an example and a counter-example. Perhaps we should be as grateful for its blunders as for its achievements. ♦

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LETTER FROM BOSNIA

WE HATE YOU

The author was in Bosnia last July, when the town of Srebrenica fell.

BY DAVID RIEFF

It is easy to feel like a fool on entering Sarajevo. Before Bosnian Serbs forced the closing of the airport, last April, one could reach the city in relative safety on one of many United Nations flights from Zagreb or from the NATO base in Falconara, Italy. Now the way in, whether one is the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina or a stringer for a provincial Spanish newspaper, is to drive over Mt. Igman, southwest of the city, and down into the village of Hrasnica and across the airport runway. Then the Serbs are never more than a few hundred yards away.

People speak of the Igman "road," but it is actually an old logging trail, unsuitable for the trucks and armored vehicles that ply it. Much of the way is switchback and sheer drop. Worse, for most of the last four kilometres there is no cover between the road and the city below. The drivers who make the run like to say, "When you can see Sarajevo, you can be seen by the Serbs"—and be fired at by them, as the hulks of vehicles that have fallen into the ravines remind you.

At an airbase outside Tuzla: The hatred was everywhere, cruel and unyielding. It was in people's faces, in the violence of their gestures and of their words.

ROGER HUTCHINGS/NETWORK/MATRIX

Many people have died going over Mt. Igman. On August 19th, America's Special Envoy to Bosnia, Robert Frasure, and two other diplomats were travelling in a V.A.B., a French armored personnel carrier. V.A.B.s are heavy, and it had been raining for four days. When the diplomats pulled out to pass another vehicle, the shoulder gave way, and the V.A.B. rolled over and over, catching fire as it did so. A few days before, two British aid workers had been killed. The toll should be higher. The crossing is usually made at night, lights off so as not to draw fire. And the road is crowded, clogged by private trucks supplying Sarajevo's black market, some coming from as far away as Germany. Drivers are paid a thousand Deutsche marks to make the run down to the shelled-out villages on the other side of the airport. Since 1993, there has been a tunnel under the airport. It is through this tunnel that Bosnians come and go and that everything from Pepsi-Cola to ammunition reaches the capital. When the Bosnian military is not using the tunnel, it is the black marketeers' turn. The charge per hour is said to be five thousand Deutsche marks.

United Nations aid convoys and private relief organizations also make the crossing over Mt. Igman. The professional truck drivers, many of whom are Bosnians living abroad, think these foreign-aid workers are fools to make the run for nothing. The Igman crossing, they say, is far too dangerous to be undertaken without proper payment. "They also say we're bad for business," one aid driver said. "We bring in free what they are paid to bring in."

Before the airport was closed, many

"We just haven't been flapping them hard enough."

• •

others came. At times, it seemed as if Sarajevans did little besides play host to artists, musicians, intellectuals, and parliamentary delegations from Western Europe and North America. But braving the discomfort of a military aircraft is one thing, risking Igman another, and those who still care about Bosnia usually choose to express their solidarity with it from home.

Sarajevans wonder why the foreigners should care. Their presence did not end the siege, so why should their absence now prolong it? And the siege, not sympathy, is what matters. It is true that when something particularly grisly happens in Sarajevo people abroad pay attention for a moment. In this, Sarajevo is different from the rest of Bosnia. When seventy-one young people were killed by a shell in Tuzla last May, the incident was scarcely reported in the United States or in Western Europe.

But whether a Bosnia story leads the news or is relegated to the back pages, Bosnians know that virtually everyone wants them to stop fighting. United States Special Envoy Frasure and his colleagues were killed on a mission to try to persuade the Bosnian Presidency to accept a partition that they themselves had all but conceded was unjust. The Americans now believe that ethnic cleansing has made partition a fait accompli and that a small Muslim-dominated state is the best that the Bosnians can hope for. Even President Clinton is said to want the Balkan wars resolved quickly, lest the need to commit troops—whether to save Sarajevo or the U.N. peacekeeping force—threaten his chances of reëlection.

I ARRIVED in Zagreb on Sunday, July 2nd, and reached Sarajevo on the following Saturday, by which time thousands of Serb troops were massing around Srebrenica, one of six U.N. safe areas. That first night, a friend asked if I had heard the latest Sarajevo good-news, bad-news joke: "A doctor tells his patient, 'I have good news and bad news. The bad news is you have inoperable cancer.' Aghast, the patient stammers, 'What is the good news?' The doctor gives him a big smile and says, 'Did you see that cute blond receptionist of mine? I'm sleeping with her.' " My friend added, as I stared at him, "Don't you like it? I think it's *perfect*—a parable for Europe. They get to contain the crisis, and we get to be destroyed."

Since the beginning of the siege, Sarajevans have relished their morbid jokes. Enes Karic, a distinguished Islamic scholar who when the war started was retranslating the Koran and is now the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports, said to me, "Today, all that remains of Muslim life in Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia is our cemeteries." And he added, "I am not surprised by the failure of the West. I am not surprised by the failure of the East. The only thing that would surprise me now would be a strong air strike—but, please, against the Serbs, not against us."

Karic, with his passionate commitment to the survival both of Bosnia and of Islam in the Balkans, was deeply worried. "Our identity as a people is in question," he told me. "We have a capital from which the only way out is a tunnel. The Bosnian Serbs really want us to leave Sarajevo for good. Right now, they are saying that we should set up a new capital, in Zenica. But, who knows, perhaps they will soon suggest that we should all move to Greenland. That would get us out of the world's way."

His daughter, he said, had asked him, "Daddy, if Sarajevo falls, is there a safe way for us to escape?" Karic had reassured her as best he could, but, he told me, "I am afraid many people are thinking more seriously than ever before about leaving." The prospect was confirmed throughout my stay; I kept hearing a joke about wishing to emigrate to New Zealand, and eventually I asked a soldier, "Why New Zealand?" "Because," he answered, looking at me as if I were the village idiot drooling on his shoes, "I do not believe that they have heard of Serbs or Croats or Muslims in New Zealand. And, I tell you, if I manage to get there I'll act as if I hadn't, either."

Self-loathing mixed with the dream of flight is typical of Sarajevans at the moment. The city, which began to restore public services like garbage collection in February of last year, is filthy again; anti-sniper barriers that were removed then have been put back up; and once again there is almost no electricity. "In 1993, I was full of anger, but I was also full of energy," Ferida Durakovic, a poet, told me. "But now the siege has gone on for much more than a thousand days. Which means that for all those days the Serb snipers have missed me. But they can't go on missing me forever. When the war started, I didn't know what war was. Now I know what to expect.

"It's not possible to ask people year after year to queue for water, brave the snipers, attend the funerals. I am much more frightened now than I was when the shelling was much worse. It's natural. We have spent our money, but we've also spent our psychological resources."

People like Durakovic—people determined to remain in Sarajevo whatever happens—have done their best to maintain the standards of comity and culture that Sarajevans pride themselves on. Yet they are increasingly ill at ease, not just with the rigors of the war but with what their society is turning into. All the cities of Bosnia are becoming encampments of rural refugees, whose habits and ways of thinking seem alien to Sarajevans. The tolerant multiethnicity of prewar times—what Sarajevans refer to self-mockingly as "multi-multi-multi"—has little meaning for the new arrivals. The war in Bosnia has always been a war of the countryside against the cities as much as one between national groups, and among rural Bosnians—the "cleansed" refugees of the small towns and villages—the destruction of cosmopolitanism is the least of the concerns. They have lost everything, and have nowhere to go. For them, fighting is the only option left. "Those to whom evil is done, do evil in return," Auden wrote, and the rural Bosnians are slowly taking on the character of their enemies. Among them a kind of Masada complex predominates.

The thing that unites urban and rural Bosnians, however, is an implacable rage: the rest of the world has allowed their country to be murdered.

In all the times I have been in Bosnia, I cannot recall one that was bleaker or more disabused. Shortly after my arrival, I arranged to have dinner with the Bosnian Prime Minister, Haris Silajdzic. We had planned to meet in a restaurant, but with the crisis in Srebrenica growing worse by the hour—the reports were that Serb forces had entered the enclave—Silajdzic could not leave his office. The building was nearly deserted, and although it has a generator, the corridors were unlit and almost dark when I got there, around seven o'clock. There were a few guards in the hallway, and two secretaries in the anteroom, but otherwise the Prime Minister was alone. He apologized for needing to be by his phone. This is a wake, I remember thinking as I sat down.

Silajdzic was exhausted, his handsome face slack with fatigue and sorrow. "Srebrenica is falling—now, just now," he said as I walked into his office. But he began by talking about the winter. "We need more than a hundred and thirty tons of food per day, and we're managing to bring in only a fraction of that." The phone rang, as it would intermittently throughout the night. Unlike many senior Bosnian officials, Silajdzic has an ability to listen as well as to speak, but, even by his standards, he was unusually silent during the call. Only at the end did he utter a few sentences. "It was the Mayor of Srebrenica," he said tonelessly. "He said he was calling to say goodbye." He added, "And yet I can't do anything for Srebrenica. Nothing at all."

I told Silajdzic of a remark I'd heard from a U.N. official at a press briefing that morning, that many governments viewed the U.N.'s mission of containment as a success; "containment" was the word used to describe the policy that the fighting would not be allowed to spread outside Bosnia.

Silajdzic nodded wearily. "Oh, yes," he said. "I've heard that from them many times. What I want to know is why, if there is no vital interest here, all these nations risk their honor and their good name in keeping an arms embargo and dealing with people who have committed genocide? They say that lifting the arms embargo will bring catastrophe—as if we didn't already have a catastrophe. They say that it will lead to the enclaves' being overrun. Look at what is happening tonight."

The phone rang again. Silajdzic listened, asked a question, and, a few

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seconds later, put the phone down. "The line went dead," he explained. "It was Srebrenica. The Serbs are attacking with infantry. With shells, you are killed; with men you are slaughtered."

After a pause, he said, "I will never really understand what has taken place here. To sit in the hills over Sarajevo, as Karadzic's people do, and kill people you know—it's sick. I think Karadzic is a man whose humanity chip is gone. He can look on as a thousand people are killed, and it doesn't move him. Most of us have an inner policeman, some kind of internalized restraint. I don't believe that Karadzic does. But I have to face reality. The Serbs are strong, particularly around Sarajevo . . ." His voice trailed off.

"Our world has become procedural," Silajdzic went on. "To listen to the politicians talk, no one is responsible for what has happened here in Bosnia. The European and American leaders think in terms of elections. Diplomats insist that the real decisions are not theirs to make. They also make it clear that they will follow orders, whatever those orders may be." He smiled. "They call this being rational. You might say that I have seen a lot of this kind of rationality without heart over the past several years. The truth is I no longer know anymore what is rational and what is irrational." His voice rose for a moment. "I wonder how people can sleep at night," he said. More quietly, he added, "But they do, I know."

Listening to Silajdzic talk, alone in his office, with the intermittent sound of gunfire and an occasional shell burst puncturing the silence of Sarajevo on the one-thousand-one-hundred-and-sixty-fourth evening of the siege, I thought of all the foreign diplomats and generals who had sat with him in this room, offering their condolences. When I said as much to Silajdzic, he just smiled. "You know," he said, "in Communist Yugoslavia, no one took responsibility for anything. It was always someone else's fault—a superior, a colleague from another ministry. I hear the same stories today. Many of the people I see are sympathetic, but they go out of their way to explain how powerless they are. Each one blames the next. The result is that nothing is done for Bosnia-Herzegovina. . . . The truth is that we don't have any oil—I am jealous of those with oil now. But the key word is not 'oil,' it's 'containment.' That's what is killing us." He added, "I am not being rhetorical. The people of Srebrenica are literally being killed as we sit here."

What Silajdzic certainly knew—but, given his position, could hardly spell out to me—was this: containment means that destroying the Bosnian Muslims was a price worth paying for the continued peace of the rest of Europe. In public, Western European officials have always insisted that there is no military solution. In private, they have been pressuring the Bosnian government to accept defeat, and urging the Americans to push the Bosnians in that direction. On the political level, they wrote off Bosnia long ago, just as, on a tactical level, Western European and U.N. officials made no secret of the fact that they had written off Srebrenica long before it actually fell to the Serbs.

HOWEVER insignificant militarily, the loss of Srebrenica was psychologically devastating. The next day, Bosnians watched helplessly as men were taken away, probably to their deaths, and women, children, and old people were expelled, and then the town was systematically burned. All this was shown on Bosnian Serb television: and everyone gets Serb TV in Sarajevo. Worse was the realization that nobody on the outside would help.

Srebrenica marked a turning point in the U.N.'s role in Bosnia. Two years earlier, when the enclave was threatened and poised to fall, Philippe Morillon, the commander of the U.N.'s peacekeeping forces, went to Srebrenica and remained there until help arrived. Morillon then negotiated the demilitarization of the enclave, persuading the Bosnian Army to give up its heavy weapons; in return, the U.N. stationed peacekeepers in the town.

This time, the U.N.'s garrison in Srebrenica, a battalion of three hundred and twenty-seven Dutch peacekeepers, was overrun in a matter of three days by Bosnian Serb forces. In fact, some of the U.N.'s people on the ground had long believed that Srebrenica would not survive. Two months

"I just want you to know, Mr. Blenner, that, like Mike Ovitz, I don't mind being Number Two."

before the battle began, Margriet Prins, a young Dutch woman who was the head of logistics in Tuzla for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, warned the commander of the peacekeeping forces there not to use any of the humanitarian supplies that had been stockpiled. "I knew that the enclaves would fall," she told me shortly after I arrived in Tuzla from Sarajevo. "I think most of us knew. It was obvious that the Bosnian Serbs needed a victory, since people on their side have been getting sicker and sicker of the war, and it was obvious that no one was going to stop them if they were serious."

And the Serbs were serious—they always had been—whereas the U.N.'s peacekeeping force, UNPROFOR, was not. In a briefing two days after Srebrenica's fall, the chief U.N. military briefer, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Coward, all but admitted as much. "We were tasked with deterring attacks against the enclaves, not defending them," he said. "In Srebrenica, it was a question of credibility. At the beginning"—he meant in 1993, when the U.N. Security Council passed its resolutions declaring Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, Gorazde, Srebrenica, and Zepa "safe areas"—"the level of deterrence was obviously quite high. But, with experience, the Bosnian Serb Army has learned the limit of the political commitment of the international community, and the military commitment as well. . . . It has learned what lies behind the threat. The answer is: Not a lot."

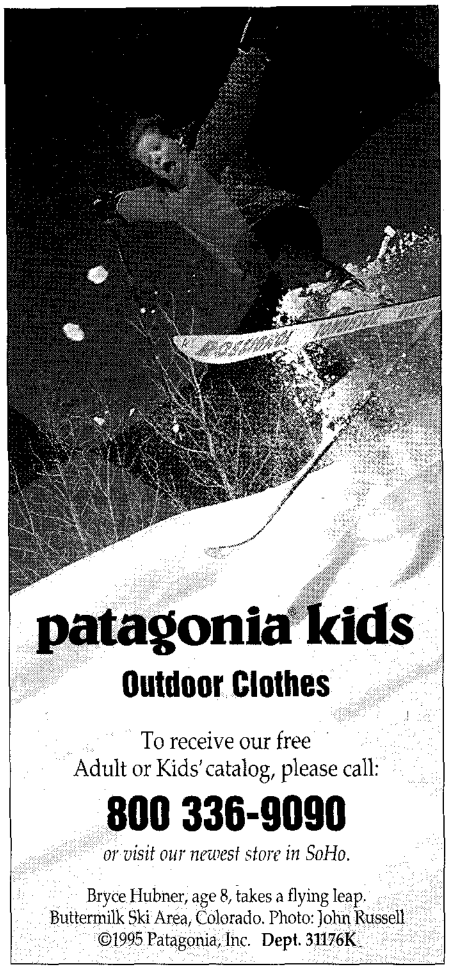
The Dutch troops had done their best, according to Coward, firing on the Serbs and calling for air support. This was not the view of the Bosnian government, and it was not, as I discovered, the view of the people of Srebrenica. Four days after Srebrenica fell, I left Sarajevo, and reached Tuzla the next day. Tuzla is about twenty miles from Srebrenica, and was crowded with the enclave's former residents. They had never looked upon the U.N. with anything but ambivalence. While in a sense the troops were Srebrenica's protectors, they were also its warders: the enclave was little more than an internment camp for Muslims whom the U.N.'s peace forces themselves had disarmed. I found that the fall of Srebrenica had transformed the refugees' mixed feelings about the U.N. into the bitterest hatred.

The hatred was everywhere, cruel and unyielding. It was in people's faces, in the violence of their gestures and of their words. They ate the food that Scandinavian UNPROFOR soldiers brought and took shelter in tents that they had provided. But none of this assuaged their anger. Receiving a few ration packs and aspirins was no atonement for losing their homes and seeing their loved ones butchered.

IN most refugee camps, it seems to take people some time to collect themselves, and new arrivals are marked by disorientation and passivity. At the U.N.-controlled airbase outside Tuzla, the refugees behaved quite differently. Many had walked for miles across the battle lines in the heat of high summer, but they did not now huddle on the ground: they stood defiantly. When a visitor lingered, he was surrounded, the refugees seemingly indifferent to the sun beating down on them; and, since many had marched barefoot, to their swollen feet; and to their legs and arms abraded by thickets they had had to move through on their journey. It took only a few moments of conversation for them to begin shouting.

"The Dutch gave the Serbs their uniforms!" a woman screamed as, a couple of yards away, a group of peacekeepers from the Scandinavian battalion of UNPROFOR erected a medical tent for the refugees. "The Dutch said, 'Don't be afraid, the Serbs just want to count you.' But the Serbs came in the night and took away the best-looking women. I am not inventing this. I saw it with my own eyes. Srebrenica is a small place. We know who is missing." She began to weep. "But the men! Them we know nothing about. Almost none of them have come here."

"We do know what happened," another woman interjected angrily. "When the Serbs were driving us away from Srebrenica in trucks, we passed through the Serbs' villages. All along the roadside they watched us. Some threw stones. But over and over I saw them making the motion of cutting throats. Before I left, I saw my own son taken away. He is



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None of these men, who all run truffle pigs,
compares a truffle to itself. "Fossil
testicles," says one. And another: "No.
Inky, tiny brains, smart only about
money." They like to say, "You get yourself

a pig like this, you've got a live pension."
The dowsing sows sweep their flat snouts across
the scat and leaf rot, scurf and duff, the slow
fires of decay. They know what to ignore;
these pigs are innocent of metaphor.

Tumor, fetus, truffle—all God's creatures
jubilate to grow. Even the diffident truffle
gives off a faint sweat from the joyful work
of burgeoning, and by that spoor the pigs
have learned to know them and to root them out.

—William Matthews

seventeen. Our men have almost all disappeared."

An old man shouted, "You are all frauds, you Western people. Your democracy is a fraud. This is a battle against Islam, a crusading war."

The woman continued, speaking more calmly, "If Clinton wanted to, he could save us. You raise our expectations, then you do nothing. 'The West will send this, the West will do that,' you say, but you are lying. You want to make yourselves feel better. You want to believe you are humanitarians. You are accomplices in our murder. I have nothing but hatred for you.

"The U.N. is worse," she went on. "It collaborated with the Serbs in Srebrenica. When we fled the town, we went to the U.N. base in Potocari. We surrendered to UNPROFOR, and they accepted our surrender. This means that they accepted an obligation to protect us. The UNPROFOR soldiers kept saying, 'No problem, no problem.' And yet the Serbs take women away in front of them. Meanwhile, their bastard of a commander was drinking brandy with the Serbs, with General Mladic himself. The Serbs filmed him; he knew what he was doing."

"For me, the U.N. is worse than the Serbs," the first woman agreed. "The U.N. watched as Serbs killed our boys and men. At least, the Serbs admit they are our enemies. The U.N. says it acts for humanity; its people said they were our friends. But they betrayed us. They took our weapons away, then they let us be killed." She faced me, livid, the tears streaming down her face. "Don't write any more books about us, you bastard. Give us back the guns the U.N. took from us."

Whatever had actually happened, this was what the refugees believed. One could walk anywhere in the camp, unescorted, aimlessly, and talk to people at random, and hear similar stories. A week later, Tadeusz Mazowiecki witnessed similar scenes of hatred. Mazowiecki, a former Polish Prime Minister, was the U.N.'s own human-rights investigator, and a man of impeccable credentials. On hearing that Mazowiecki worked for the U.N., many refugees refused to speak to him. The experience was so upsetting that he decided to resign from his post; he could not, he said, work for an organization that allowed Srebrenica to happen.

An old man told me about a group of Serb soldiers he had known before the war. "We worked together in the furniture factory for fifteen years," he said. "I was with my son. He's sixteen. The Serbs called me by my name. They said, 'Avdo, you can go. We only want your son.' I started to cry. I said, 'Please, give me my son.' But they answered, 'No, we're taking him. Just go, Avdo, he'll be all right.' But I know he's dead. My wife had died a few weeks before, and he wanted to stay with me. But now he's dead, too, and I'm alone. What am I going to do? How am I going to make a life?"

Anger seemed to sustain the women I had talked to earlier. This man was unluckier. He had no anger. When he finished speaking, he simply stood, silent and motionless, as if he literally did not know what to do next. It was a beautiful sunny day. Elsewhere in Europe, people were doubtless enjoying the unaccustomed heat.

Some of the men of Srebrenica did manage to save themselves. When the town was overrun, they fled into the hills and decided to stay together—as Tito's Partisans had done during their epic retreat into Bosnia, in 1942—and try to make their escape as a group. Eventually, the men were able to make their way to safety. But it was seven days before they managed to get out of the enclave. Many were killed along the way in Serb ambushes or artillery barrages; many more were captured and murdered in cold blood. "Twice, we came out of a hiding place to find stacks of corpses in the valley, all with their throats cut," a soldier named Senad Melagic told me.

The march out had been terrible, Senad said. "People started to hallucinate, we were so tired. People killed themselves by wandering out from the woods, to be cut down by the Serbs. A friend tried that, but I dragged him back, the way a tractor drags a plow. Can you imagine? There was a road with military vehicles on it, shooting randomly into the hills and woods, hoping to find our hiding places. We had to keep moving. Toward the end, we reached a meadow, flat, green—it was our only way out. We were being fired at from both sides. Groups of us ran across. For whatever reason, my group made it."

Senad and one of his comrades, Hamdija Hasanovic, shared a dislike of foreigners in general and of the U.N. peacekeepers in particular. "The Dutch did nothing," Hamdija said. "When the Serbs began to attack, the U.N. put a few armored personnel carriers in the

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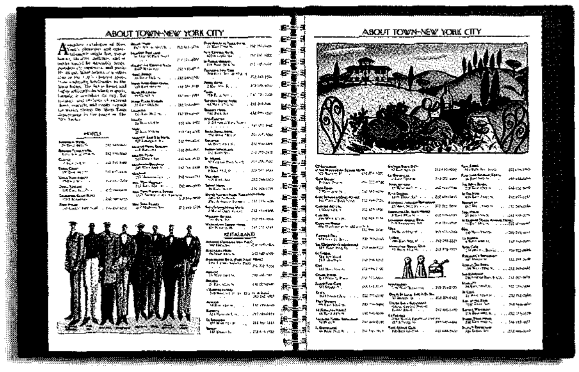

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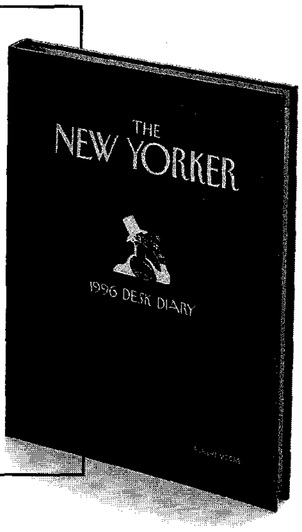

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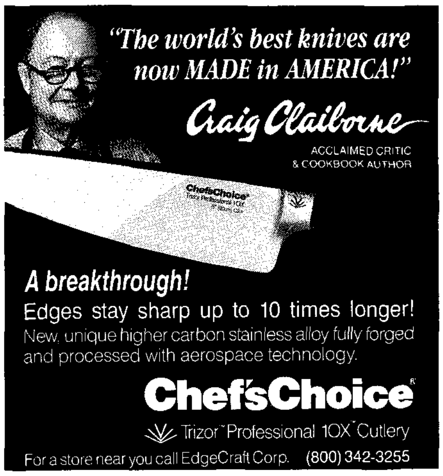

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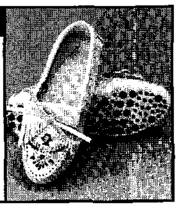

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line of advance. But the faster the enemy came, the faster the Dutch pulled back." I asked about the NATO air strikes, and Hamdija smiled and shook his head.

Both men blamed the U.N. for the fall of Srebrenica. "They say they are peacekeepers, but they do nothing to keep peace," Senad said.

"And they say they are soldiers, but when it looks as if they might be killed they surrender," Hamdija added. He winced, then rubbed his leg.

Both men were barefoot. Senad said he'd lost his boots somewhere along the march. Now his feet were too swollen for the shoes he had been given by the Tuzla authorities. The two men said they had been watching television, and what they saw made them still angrier at the U.N. "Now they are saying they never meant to protect us," Senad said. "That was not what they told us before, when they persuaded us to give them the few heavy weapons we had. Then they said that if we demilitarized the U.N. would look after us."

Hamdija added, "In these past years, I have spent much time with foreigners. They promised and they promised, and they did nothing. But for me the worst is that they are not even ashamed."

According to Senad, the long-standing U.N. presence in Srebrenica and the trust that some had invested in UNPROFOR actually resulted in his comrades' being killed. During their flight, he said, some had been tricked into surrendering by Serbs driving the Dutch UNPROFOR battalion's armored vehicles. "I saw a U.N. armored personnel carrier drive by," he told me, "and from inside I could hear someone shouting, 'Come out, we'll protect you!' Many of my comrades thought it was the voice of one of the Dutch interpreters, and left their hiding places. But as they approached, the doors of the vehicles opened, and firing broke out. No one survived, as far as I could tell. And I watched this not once but several times. I only wish I could have called out and warned them, but I was afraid that I would be killed, too."

Later, on my return to the United States, I learned that stockpiles of U.N. uniforms and equipment had been stolen. But I didn't have this knowledge then. And neither did these two men: now Senad wanted to find his family, Hamdija wanted revenge. "I shall never forget what you in the international community did to us," he told me. "I shall never forgive the U.N. for its betrayal, for helping the Serbs murder Srebrenica. And I shall never forgive you Americans for deceiving us with your lying sympathy and your false promises. I hope the time will come when I can pay you back."

SUCH sentiments have become commonplace in Bosnia with the fall of Srebrenica and, several days later, of Zepa. The world, of course, has virtually forgotten about the two enclaves. After all, so much has happened since. The Croats have retaken the Krajina. The Americans have become reëngaged in the peace process. And then there is O.J. But at ground zero, among the refugees at the Tuzla airbase, no one cares why European politicians deny Bosnia the right to defend itself, or that America is more interested in the Fuhrman tapes and Shannon Faulkner's withdrawal from The Citadel than in the dead of eastern Bosnia, so many of whom are believed to be buried in mass graves. And no one confuses the Croatian victory in the Krajina with a Bosnian victory over the Serbs. The refugees mourn their dead. The soldiers dream of revenge.

At the Tuzla airbase, which became, as the refugees spread across it, a world of women, children, and old men, one scene repeated itself over and over. A young or middle-aged man would straggle in, and before long he would be surrounded by women and children. Even from a distance, the ensuing conversation was easy to follow. The man would say something, and his listeners would begin to scream. What he had brought, of course, was news of the death of a father, a brother, a son. The screams echoed across the valley on which the airbase sits as towheaded children played, oblivious, among the tents covered in blue plastic sheeting that bore the logo of the U.N.H.C.R. For now, no one is listening to the birth pains of these people, Europe's homegrown Palestinians. Sooner or later, though, we will have to, whether it suits us to do so or not. ♦

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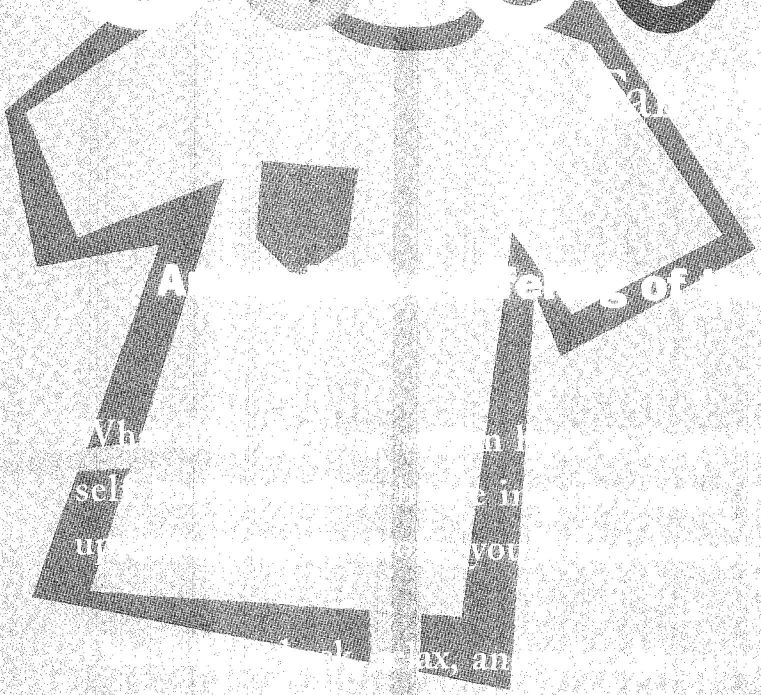

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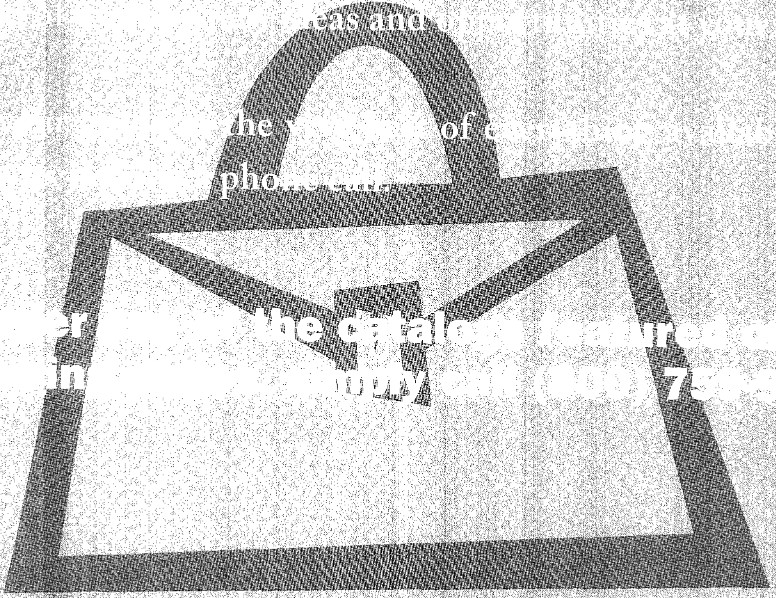

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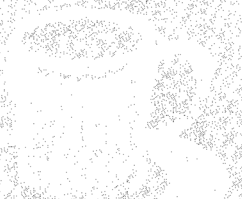

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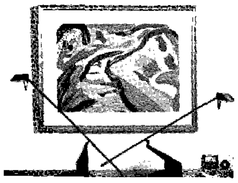

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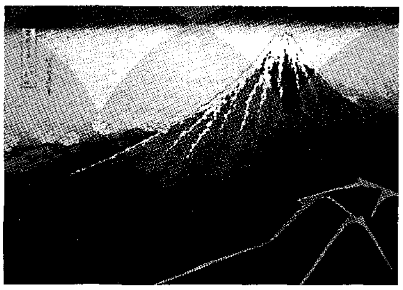

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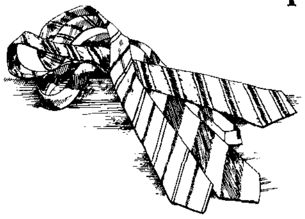

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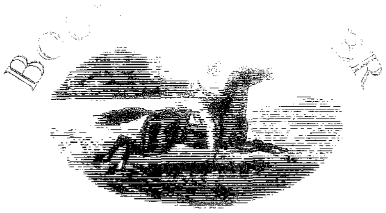

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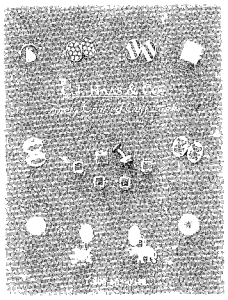

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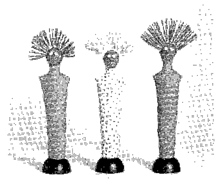

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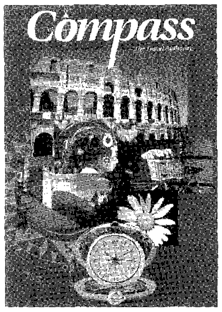

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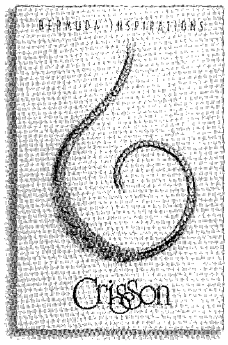

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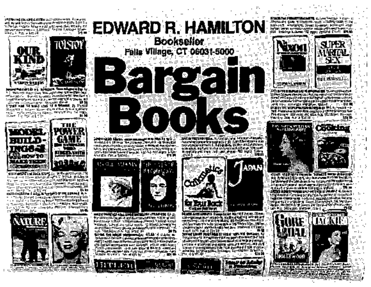

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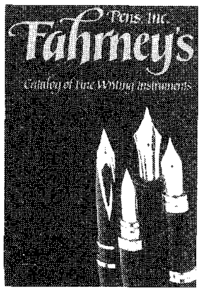
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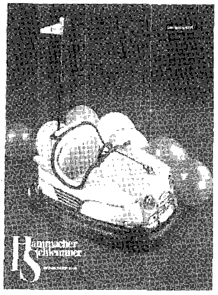

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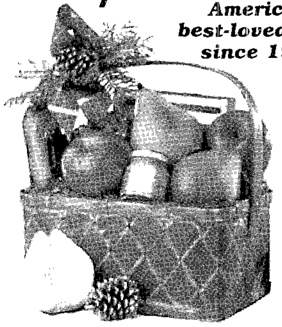

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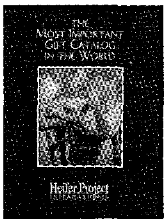
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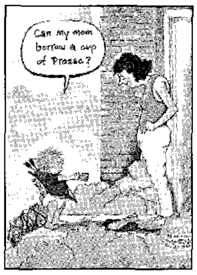
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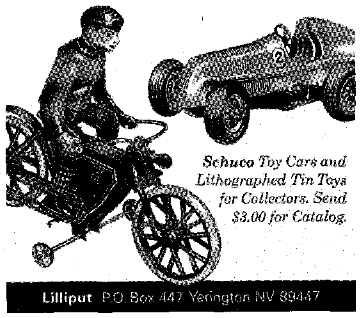
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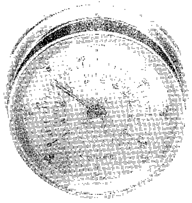

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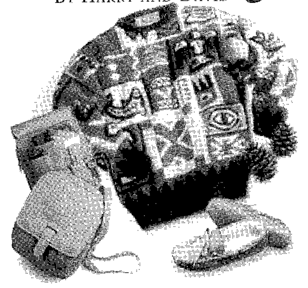

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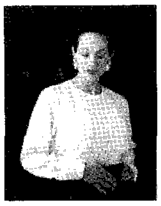

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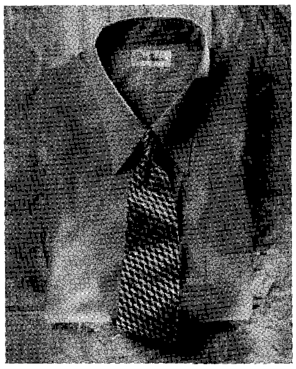

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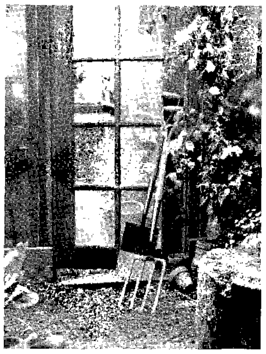

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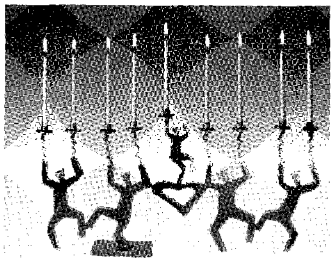

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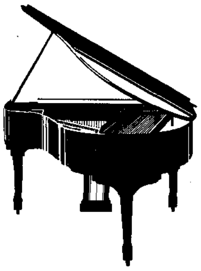

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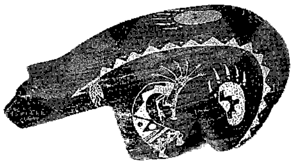

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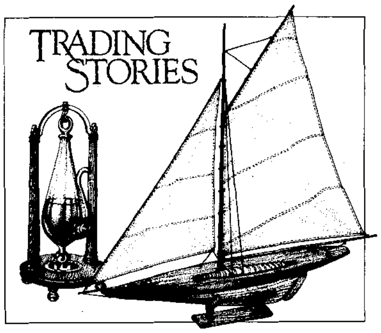

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

A RAPIST'S HOMECOMING

There is no universally accepted method for treating violent sex offenders, and no way to know which offenders remain a threat. But the prison therapist Kay Jackson was convinced that her patient Donald Chapman would attack again—and he was about to be released back into the community.

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

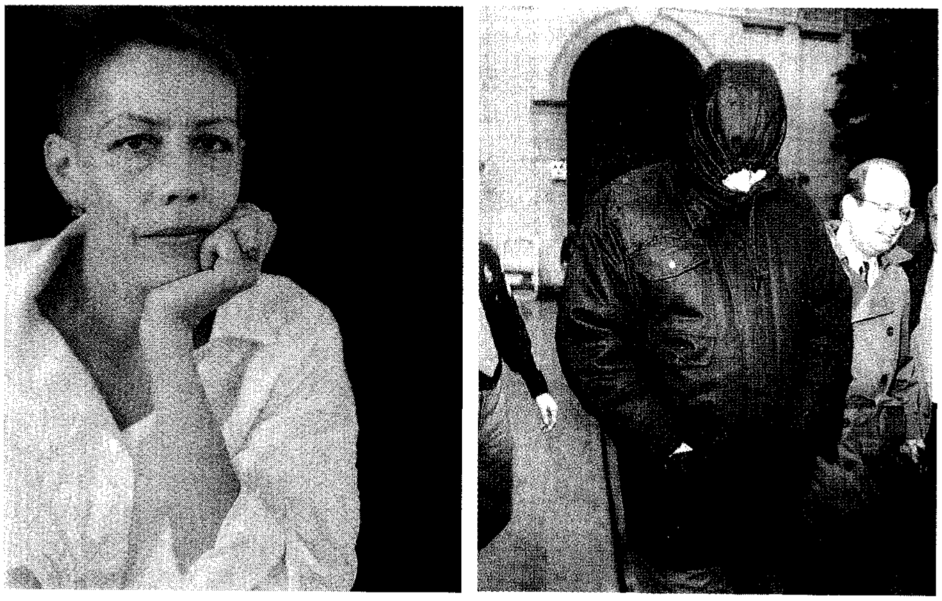
On November 17, 1992, the elderly parents of Donald Arthur Chapman drove to Avenel, New Jersey, to bring their son home. Donald Chapman had been away since 1980, when he turned himself in to police and confessed to kidnapping and raping a young woman. Few of the Chapmans' neighbors knew the details of his crime. There had been little publicity and no trial, and Chapman's homecoming failed to stir much interest in the handsome, middle-class town of Wyckoff, where he had grown up and his parents still lived.

Avenel is twelve miles south of Newark on Route 1, past a go-go cocktail lounge and a XXX video store. Until recently, a billboard advertising the Hot Tub Club in the Post Road Inn ("Get Wet! $26.95") marked the turnoff to the Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center, one of the largest facilities in the world devoted exclusively to the treatment of sex offenders. It is set beside the towering walls of the old Rahway (now East Jersey) state prison, which was built at the turn of the century. The Avenel center, which opened in 1976, looks like many maximum-security prisons constructed in the last several decades: it is smaller and lower-slung than the Big Houses of the past, and has bunkerlike window slits and high chain-link fences topped with coils of razor wire. Inside, however, there is a culture radically different from the one at Rahway. From the beginning, the philosophy behind Avenel was that it would be run by therapists, not by corrections officials. The old way of thinking, at Rahway, was that most sex offenders were untreatable psychopaths. The offenders were often given indeterminate sentences, so that they could be locked away for as long as they were considered dangerous, which could be their entire lives. The new way of thinking, at Avenel, was that compulsive, repetitive sex offenders were different from other kinds of criminals, and that their behavior could be controlled by the use of therapeutic techniques similar to those used in the treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts. Rahway has the reputation of being one of the most dangerous facilities in the state, and Avenel of being one of the safest. Unlike most prisons, which are brightly lit echo chambers, Avenel seems deceptively subdued, almost sleepy, like a small-town library.

Donald Chapman was thirty-seven years old when he left Avenel and came back to Wyckoff. He had a beard and shoulder-length, dark-brown hair. No longer the lanky young man he had been when he was sent to prison, during the Carter Administration, he was six feet three and powerfully built, weighing more than two hundred pounds. Acquaintances remembered the younger Donald Chapman as a loner with a quirky sense of humor and a crafty, scheming intelligence. "Don would commit a crime and taunt you with it," says Julius Omelianuk, a former police officer in the neighboring town of Midland Park, who recalls that he arrested him half a dozen times. Donald's father, a retired machinist, had been a longtime member of Wyckoff's volunteer fire department, and as a boy, Omelianuk says, Donald committed a number of acts of petty arson. But Donald also had a passion for nature. He surrounded himself with animals, and often adopted stray pets. According to local residents, he was a fearless and fearsome child. When he was a teen-ager, he would crawl through the town's sewers to kill rats with a machete, and he once took a box of water snakes to the police station to frighten the officers. He had probably captured these reptiles in a densely wooded ravine behind his house, where he spent much of his spare time camping along the stream, clearing brush, and occasionally stalking and trapping animals. Eventually, he began preying on people, too.

When Chapman was eighteen, he lured three girls, ages nine and ten, into the woods and tied two of them to a tree. They escaped while he was trying to persuade the third girl to take off her underpants. The girls told the police, and Chapman spent the next two years in a reformatory. After his release, he went back to live with his parents and worked on and off as a furniture mover. During this period, he attacked a woman and struck her with a blackjack, but was able to stop himself from going any further. He was never arrested for this crime. Then, in the summer of 1980, when he was twenty-five, he tackled a woman on a bicycle, dragged her into the woods, stuffed a rag into her mouth, and tied her to a tree. The woman was twenty-three, but she looked much younger; Chapman later told police that he thought she was no more than sixteen. He left her there for several hours, while he went home and packed a bag with rope, leather thongs, a BB gun, hypodermic needles, a vibrator, gunpowder, firecrackers, lighter fluid, two fire extinguishers, scissors, razors, and several scalpels. He also brought along a shovel and a pickaxe. Police say that he intended to torture his victim to death and bury the corpse. Chapman raped and sodomized the woman, but when she began bleeding from the rectum he was struck with remorse. He untied her and asked her if there was a place where he might go to get help. Chapman knew that he was deeply disturbed. The next day, he turned himself in to Officer Omelianuk.

Chapman pleaded guilty to rape and kidnapping, and in February, 1981, he received a twenty-year sentence. He spent the next eleven years at Avenel, being treated for his violent sexual behavior. He willingly participated in therapy, but as the years passed he made little progress. There was a duality in his nature that seemed to be irreconcilable. Chapman himself was troubled by the split; in the late eighties, he told a person at Avenel that he viewed one part of himself as kind and loving and another part as a violent sexual sadist. According to legal papers that were released to the press, he told one of his therapists that he was a "failed rapist," because his victims were still alive, and he said that he had learned how to evade detection, boasting that the next time he raped he would not be caught. Edward Mosch, a former inmate who was in a therapy group with Chapman, says, "Basically, he wasn't going to have another victim live to testify." (Chapman, through his attorney, Vincent Basile, of Hackensack, vehemently denies describing himself this way or making such boasts.)



The psychologist Kay Jackson, and Donald Chapman (shown outside Bergen County Superior Court in 1993). Jackson committed what some would call a betrayal of trust and others would call an act of heroism. Chapman says, "I've served my time and now I should just be left alone."

LEFT: EILEEN TRAVELL; RIGHT: CARMINE GALASSO/THE RECORD

William Plantier, who is Avenel's superintendent, remembers Chapman as "a strange, schizy kind of guy," but says that "institutionally he was fine—almost an ideal inmate." Some of the guards and inmates saw Chapman differently. "Chapman was quite sinister," Oveston Cox, a guard who has been at Avenel since 1988, says. "Even his peers shunned him." According to a former inmate, who asked me to call him Bill, "Donald's anger was outrageous. He was nuts right from the door. Once, he threw a three-pound ball-peen hammer at a guy in the woodshop. With Chapman, it was the littlest things that would set him off—like he'd go crazy if the cooks wouldn't give him an extra half-dozen hard-boiled eggs at breakfast. He made a big wooden locker, like a hope chest, and he had it filled with plastic bottles of honey. He'd squirt a whole pint of honey down his throat. He'd go haywire after that." Once Chapman felt the rush, Bill says, he would race outside and start scrubbing the walls or pulling weeds in the yard; he had a great need for physical labor. He often went out to the weight pile with the other musclemen. He was among the strongest bench pressers in the yard. "He'd throw up three hundred and fifteen pounds like a loaf of Wonder Bread," Bill says.

A year before his release, Chapman watched a television documentary about the new "sexual predator" law in Washington State. There, a convicted pedophile named Earl Shriner had repeatedly admitted his intention of torturing children when he was released from prison. Prison officials felt powerless. Shriner was released from jail in December, 1988, and five months later he raped and sexually mutilated a seven-year-old boy. The episode caused Washington State to institute a stringent new law that allows notification of the community when a convicted sex offender moves into its neighborhood. It also permits the state to lock up indefinitely offenders who are deemed to be sexual predators; that is, those with a pathological need to gratify themselves by violent sex with strangers. Chapman and many other prisoners soberly watched outraged citizens proclaiming that they wanted men like Earl Shriner locked up forever—or worse. The television report may have given Chapman a premonition of what his life would be like when he got out of Avenel. He decided he needed help. He admitted to several people that he was afraid of what might happen after his release—that he might attack someone else, even kill. He also expressed a fear of vigilantes.

At this time, Chapman turned to a therapist named Kay Jackson. That was seen as a promising step, because Jackson had a reputation at Avenel as a miracle worker. Although she dealt with many of the least promising cases—rapists and sex murderers and homosexual pedophiles—she managed to have a significant effect on them. In the small, recondite world of sex-offender therapists, Jackson is seen as a talented maverick. "She's not a bullshit artist," Nathaniel J. Pallone, a professor of psychology and criminal justice at Rutgers, who has served as an adviser at Avenel, says. "She's confrontational and intolerant of deception of any sort. It's a way of being that expresses itself therapeutically. I don't think it's a pose—she is what she presents herself as being."

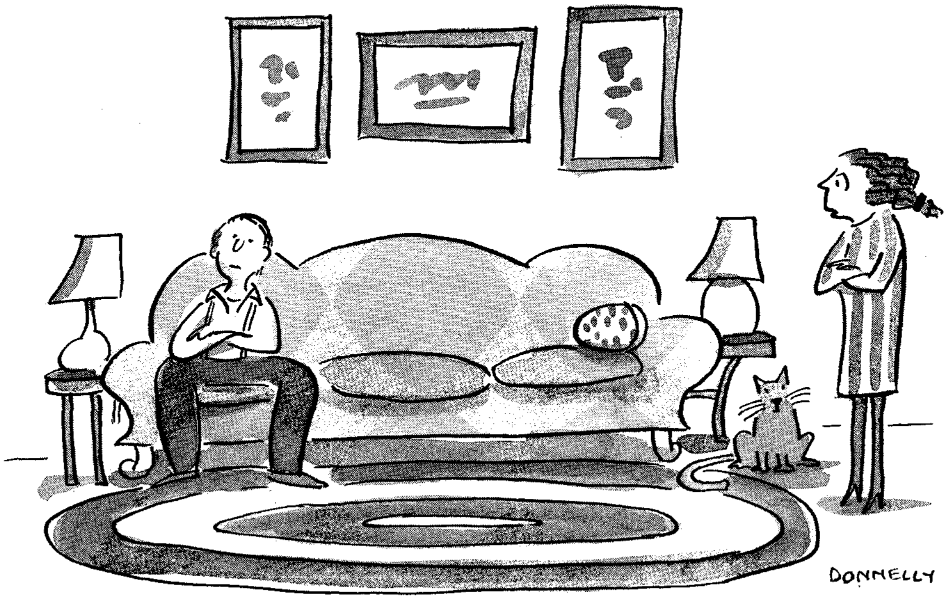
Jackson, who is thirty-nine, grew up in Colorado and California. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Ithaca College, in Ithaca, New York, and counselled women at a rape crisis center there, but eventually she got tired of dealing with battered women who continually returned to their abusive mates. "I realized I just didn't know enough," she says. She went back to school to study counselling psychology, and eventually earned a doctorate from Columbia University. In 1985, she went to work at Avenel. Her family and friends were alarmed. "You put yourself through an Ivy League school and you go off and work with scumbags?" her mother asked. That was a typical reaction.

"It's really easy to be a psychologist working with victims," Jackson says. "Everybody pats you on the back. It's different when you work with offenders. Everybody says, 'This is a revolting population—why would you work with them?' If you don't take your mission for public safety very seriously, I do not think that you can have the stomach to do this job. The mandate is very clear: to stop these men from ever hurting anybody again.”

It is interesting to imagine the impression that the feminist Kay Jackson must have made on the rapist Donald Chapman. Jackson is a slender woman with alert green eyes and a red flattop. In repose, she has a fierce and wary look. Her ears are abundantly studded and cuffed with silver, and they seem to have a quality of motility, like some woodland creature’s, suggesting that she may be able to perceive sounds and meanings outside the usual human range. On her left shoulder she has a tattoo of a voluptuous Gaston Lachaise woman doing a handstand on a globe. In some lights, Jackson looks like a weary Parisian intellectual, and in others like a sulky adolescent thug—the sort of person you would cross the street to avoid. Jackson is drawn to the margins of society, and it is this quality that allows her to work with the bodybuilders and ex-bikers who make up a large proportion of the men seeking help. “Sex offenders don’t give you an honest picture of what they are really like—they have this world that is hidden,” says Barbara Legutko, a friend and colleague of Jackson’s, who is the art teacher at Avenel. “Kay gets into those hidden caves in their minds and digs out their secrets. She’s very good at it.” According to Cox, “She stands up to the bulls of the place. I’ve seen her get in people’s faces when I thought she was going to get knocked out—and she walked away in one piece. Other therapists may say, ‘I’m not going to go to that level.’ ”

Although Jackson has dealt with many of the most dangerous and most despised men in New Jersey, she still remembers her first reaction to Chapman: “He was tall and unbelievably strong. There was also something unusual about him: a flatness to his eyes, his affect, his voice; a tendency to avoid eye contact. He didn’t seem to need sleep, and he had an extra tolerance for pain. He scared the living daylights out of me.”

At night, when the other inmates were sleeping, Chapman sat on the edge of his bunk methodically shredding paper into precise half-inch squares. This included everything from unwanted mail to pornographic magazines. “He spent hours on end slicing those pictures,” Bill recalls. “He’d fill a five-gallon bucket with confetti.” Chapman also pored over the Bible and liked to watch the Sunday-morning evangelists on television. He claimed at times to be making great progress, but admitted that his sleeplessness was provoked by his fear of the violent images that came into his mind whenever he relaxed. He discussed his fears with the other inmates. “He was scared of going home,” Edward Mosch says. “I was in jail for rape, and it scared the hell out of *me*. I didn’t want to see that guy getting out.” Even the other inmates believed that Chapman was a depressing example of the limits of therapy. According to Mosch, “It was *our* concern—not just Kay Jackson’s but the whole group’s—that he was going to commit another crime.”



“And when you said that my pesto was the best pesto you ever had and could ever hope to have—was that a lie, too?”

Chapman’s twenty-year sentence carried a ten-year minimum; with credits earned in prison, he was scheduled to finish serving his sentence in less than twelve years. That meant he would be free to go, with no parole, the moment the gates opened for him. In the last few months before his release, Kay Jackson met several times with him and his parents, Richard and Joyce Chapman. Jackson told the Chapmans her fears about Donald’s future behavior, and Donald himself talked candidly about his continuing sexual arousal by sadistic fantasies of abducting, raping, and torturing a victim in the woods. Sometimes these fantasies included murder. The Chapmans, who have two other children, have been dealing with his problems for three decades now. “I know his family quite well,” Julius Omelianuk says. “His mother and father are devoted family people. And, needless to say, they’re very perplexed with the situation.”

Eventually, Jackson told Chapman that she wanted to have him involuntarily committed to a mental hospital after his release from prison. Jackson called Vincent Basile, who has defended a number of other sex offenders. In Basile’s opinion, Chapman was one of his better-adjusted clients. “I always thought he had the best chance to make it on the outside,” Basile says. “Not only because of his guilt and remorse but because he had roots, a good family structure. He’s a simple, religious man. Never a Christmas went by without a card from Donald.” Jackson said that she thought Chapman should be committed to a psychiatric hospital. “Well, we’re going to have a tussle,” Basile said.

Basile, on behalf of his client, disputes the accounts of Chapman’s violent behavior at Avenel, pointing out that Chapman was not charged with any major disciplinary infractions during his time there. (Chapman declined to be interviewed for this article.) Basile also maintains that the severity and intractability of Chapman’s illness have been exaggerated, and that the assertions about his client’s continuing propensity to violence are overblown and, in some cases, false. Plantier’s assessment of Chapman as “almost an ideal inmate” would seem to support Basile’s view, and it is true that many of the allegations arise in connection with the turbulent final period of Chapman’s incarceration at Avenel, when he was faced with the alternative of an uncertain reception in the outside world or the daunting prospect of con-

Coffee Shop

"Must be one of those new Russian mobsters."

• •

finement in a mental institution.

In any case, as his release date approached, Chapman started picking fights with other inmates. One of his few pleasures at Avenel was working as a carpenter in the maintenance department, but he lost that job when prison authorities, taking note of his dark mood, became worried that he might deliberately hurt himself with the power tools. He appealed to get his job back, and when his request was denied he became abusive—cursing and, on occasion, threatening the guards. "He was not ready to go anywhere," Oveston Cox, the Avenel guard, observes. "And he had quite a fixation with Dr. Jackson." Chapman asked to be allowed to remain at Avenel, but there was no legal way for the State of New Jersey to keep him in prison, unless he committed another crime.

Three Avenel psychiatrists agreed with Jackson that Chapman was a sadist, and that he would probably strike again. Chapman was contrite, however, and he persuaded them that his violent fantasies were horrors he was afraid of, not pleasures he intended to act out. In the opinion of the psychiatrists, Chapman was not psychotic, which is to say that he was not suffering from hallucinations or thought disorders; therefore, he was not "mentally ill" in the legal sense and they could find no justification for locking him away in an institution. Chapman himself wanted more treatment, but he didn't see why it was necessary for him to be committed to a psychiatric hospital. If he couldn't stay in Avenel, he wanted to go home, where he could be outdoors again.

Psychologists have a legal obligation to notify authorities if they know that a client intends to hurt someone. In order to justify violating a client's confidentiality, however, it is generally not enough to say that he is a menace to society. The law in New Jersey permits disclosure if a client is an imminent danger to himself or "other identifiable persons." But Chapman had not actually threatened anyone. If Jackson divulged her conclusions about his capacity for violence, she might be crossing a moral and professional boundary. It was a step that she was loath to take. In the past, Avenel's internal-affairs unit had occasionally notified local prosecutors when an inmate was being released into their community, and Jackson herself, with the consent of the inmates involved, had written "letters of concern" to police departments. With Chapman, however, Jackson felt the need to go beyond routine notification. She agonized over the decision, consulting with her colleagues and with ethics advisers at the American Psychological Association.

And so, on the day before Chapman's parents came to take their son home, Jackson committed what some would call a betrayal of trust and others would call an act of heroism. She telephoned the police departments of Wyckoff, which is in Bergen County, and West Milford, the town where Chapman had kidnapped his victim in 1980, to warn them that Chapman was coming home, and expressing her opinion that he would rape again within thirty days, probably targeting a girl between eight and ten years of age. She subsequently wrote a confidential memo to the Bergen County prosecutor's office, warning that Chapman "represents a clear and present danger to others, because of his sexualized rage, deep-seated feelings of low self-esteem and resentment and fears of others." John Fahy, the Bergen County prosecutor, later said that no one in his office could remember ever before being "contacted by Avenel or any psychologist saying that someone is going to kidnap, rape, and kill." After Jackson got in touch with Fahy's office, Fahy obtained therapy notes and other records of Chapman's treatment at Avenel.

Within a few days of Chapman's homecoming, neighbors noticed an unmarked police car in front of the Chapmans' pale-yellow house, on Dartmouth Street. The car never left. Pizzas were delivered to it. Whenever Chapman took a walk, three officers got out of the car and followed him. On November 20th, Chapman's third day home, the surveillance team videotaped Chapman entering a shed behind his parents' house. Wearing what appeared to be surgical gloves, he removed a large bag from the shed, and put it on a camping trailer. Then he removed a coil of rope and an electrical cord—tools that seemed reminiscent of the ones he had used in his previous crimes. When the police called Jackson, she was certain she knew what Chapman was doing. "This is a person who's very patterned in his behavior," she told them. "He's getting his kit together."

KAY JACKSON'S husband, Sam Johnson, never wanted her to take the job at Avenel, but in the fourteen years they have been together he has learned that it is fruitless to argue with her once she has made up her mind. Sam was a professor of psychology at Columbia Teachers College when he met Kay, who was a graduate student in the process of getting a divorce from her first husband. (Sam is now the vice-president for student affairs at Baruch College of the City University of New York.) There were two powerful inducements that Avenel offered the young doctoral candidate. One was impressive benefits. The other was the opportunity to do original research on a population that is little understood. "The place is a research gold mine," Jackson says. Once Jackson took the job, though, she strongly believed that she was making changes in the lives of the men, and Sam could understand why. "Psychologists, unlike masons or carpenters, don't always have a sense of when their work is done," he says. "But if you are working as a therapist with someone who has fifteen or twenty years to spare you can develop a sense of the impact of your work. Kay is stark and attractive and powerful, and that makes her a big challenge for those men. I think that's an experience a lot of rapists need to have." But in fact Sam didn't want to hear too much about her job. "I was put off by the gory details," he admits. "Part of me feels that a lot of these people just ought to be punished, not given treatment."

Sam quickly learned how dangerous his wife's job was. In January of 1986, three weeks after Kay began working at Avenel, she was held hostage in her office. An inmate named Allen Thomas had barricaded the door and was threatening her with a sharpened broomstick, demanding that she help him get a message to the media that he was being treated unfairly. An official at Avenel notified Sam, and by the time he arrived the prison was locked down and sharpshooters on the rooftops were aiming their guns at the barred window of Kay's office. A member of the SWAT team asked if there was any health reason that they could not use tear gas. "Yes," Sam said. "She's pregnant." She and Sam had recently got the news that their first child was on the way.

After a five-and-a-half-hour standoff, Jackson persuaded Thomas to let her go. No one was hurt. Jackson came back to work the day after the incident, surprising both the inmates and the staff. That was only because they didn't know her very well. Sam, who did, had urged her to take some time off, but she declared that no one was going to scare her out of her job. "I grew up on horseback, and one of the first things I learned is that you need to get back in the saddle as soon as you've been thrown," she says. Jackson's return transformed her into a legend. "I got the reputation of being fearless, which is complete bullshit," she says.

When she walked back into a therapy group that she led, she found that the men were embarrassed by what Thomas had done but were also intensely curious. "Many of them had never really thought about what a victim goes through," Jackson recalls. "They were protective, but some of them were also turned on." It was not just her status as hero and victim that resonated with the men. For the first time, some of the inmates and guards got a look at her husband: Sam Johnson is a six-foot-four-inch, two-hundred-and-fifty-pound black man. This was a provocative revelation, both to the prisoners and to some of her co-workers. The more racist whites were scandalized. The blacks were fascinated, and some of them began coming on to Jackson; they assumed she had a thing for black men.

Avenel is a virtual palace of sexual fantasies, and Jackson was bound to figure in the convicts' imaginations. From the moment she arrived at Avenel, the rapists took note of her, but even the pedophiles expressed an interest in her boyishness. Fantasies, of course, are valuable cues for therapy, but Jackson believes that she has a responsibility not to be overstimulating. She dresses rather severely: she rarely wears bright colors, and when she's not wearing jeans or pants she wears long skirts. Jackson thought that she was doing everything possible to downplay her sexuality, but early in her tenure at Avenel, when she was wearing a jacket, a blouse, an ankle-length white skirt, a slip, stockings, and underpants, an inmate whispered to her, "I know that you're going without undergarments just for me."

NOSTALGIA

(THE LAKE AT NIGHT)

The black water.
Lights dotting the entire perimeter.
Their shaky reflections.
The dark tree line.
The plap-plapping of water around the pier.
Creaking boats.
The creaking pier.
Voices in conversation, in discussion—two men, adults—serious inflections (the words themselves just out of reach).
A rusty screen-door spring, then the door swinging shut.
Footsteps on a porch, the scrape of a wooden chair.
Footsteps shuffling through sand, animated youthful voices (*how many?*)—distinct, disappearing.
A sudden guffaw; some giggles; a woman's—no, a young girl's—sarcastic reply; someone's assertion; a high-pitched male cackle.
Somewhere else a child laughing.
Bug zappers.
Tires whirring along a pavement . . . not stopping . . . receding.
Shadows from passing headlights.

A cat's eyes caught in a headlight.

No moon.

Connect-the-dot constellations filling the black sky—the ladle of the
Big Dipper not quite directly overhead.

The radio tower across the lake, signalling.

Muffled quacking near the shore; a frog belching; crickets, cicadas,
katydids, etc.—their relentless sexual messages.

A sudden gust of wind.

Branches brushing against each other—pine, beech.

A fibreglass hull tapping against the dock.

A sudden chill.

The smell of smoke, woodstove fires.

A light going out.

A dog barking; then more barking from another part of the lake.

A burst of quiet laughter.

Someone in the distance calling someone too loud.

Steps on a creaking porch.

A screen-door spring, the door banging shut.

Another light going out (you must have just undressed for bed).

My bare feet on the splintery pier turning away from the water.

—Lloyd Schwartz

Jackson asked a colleague what she should do to keep from arousing the inmates' fantasies. "If you wore a potato sack, you would still excite some of these guys," the other therapist told her.

Nothing, however, was more stimulating—or more upsetting—to the men than Jackson's pregnancy. "My dominant relationship with most of these men is maternal," Jackson says, and her impending motherhood only intensified that connection. Nearly all the inmates had had difficult relationships with their mothers. They fretted that Jackson was going to abandon them. The pedophiles were especially worried, because they feared she would see them as a threat to her. One asked in a group-therapy session what she would do to him if she learned that he had molested her child. Jackson said there was no doubt in her mind that she would kill him.

Jackson's maternity leave gave her a chance to reflect on the problems that were plaguing Avenel. The therapists had begun using the term "contagion" to describe the corrupting emotional effects of dealing with sexual fantasies every day. There were rumors of therapists and other staff members' having sex with inmates; in several cases, the allegations led to the departure of employees. In 1994 alone, three staff members resigned or were suspended as a result of alleged sexual improprieties with inmates. It became a joke that it was getting harder to tell the staff from the inmates. "There's just a hair's breadth of difference," one former Avenel therapist told me.

In the decade that Kay Jackson has been at Avenel, fifty-seven men she has treated have been paroled or have finished serving their sentences; she knows of only four who have been rearrested. Of course, the great bulk of sex offenses go undetected, and conviction rates are notoriously low. The average sex offender may commit an extraordinary number of crimes in his lifetime—sometimes in the hundreds—and the crimes have been known to escalate in seriousness: from peeping and exhibitionism, for example, to molesting and raping. Most offenders, like Chapman, have been sexually deviant since adolescence; but there are also men who were sent to Avenel in their seventies—who did not commit a sexual offense until some crisis in their lives, such as the loss of a job or the death of a spouse.

Sex offenders cut across all racial, economic, and social lines. The extent to which they also cut across gender lines is a controversial question. It is an axiom of sex-offender therapy that most victimizers have been victims in their youth, and it is a widespread belief among therapists that many sex offenders have been molested by their mother or some other female caretaker. It is common to hear such claims from the men at Avenel. And yet, in the entire state of New Jersey, only sixteen women are in prison for sexual crimes, which suggests either that there is a considerable amount of self-justifying fantasy among offenders or that offenses by women are both underreported and socially tolerated.

Incarceration does not do much to influence offenders' future behavior, but it is unclear whether treatment—especially when it is mandatory—does much, either. Some treatment programs advertise remarkable success, but often the difference between treatment and simple incarceration in their effect on future sexual behavior appears to be negligible. At one point, thirty-nine other states had treatment programs similar to the one at Avenel, but it would be fair to say that there has been a general loss of faith in such programs. States that were leaders in the field, like Florida and California, abandoned their efforts after facing up to discouraging results. In 1989, an overview of sex-offender treatment published by the American Psychological Association found no evidence that the rate of recidivism for treated offenders was any lower than it was for untreated offenders. The statistics for Avenel were included in that overview, and they gave the impression that the kind of "insight oriented" therapy practiced there was an exception to the prevailing trend. Not long after, however, a new superintendent discovered that the Avenel statistics were being compiled by inmates and were not reliable. Now only a dozen or so other states have programs similar to Avenel's, and most of them are on a far smaller scale.

The treatment that has proved to be most effective for sex offenders—surgical castration—is one that seems to be politically unacceptable, even when it is done on a voluntary basis. Injections of a female hormone can also work, if they are rigorously supervised, but they have side effects that can be serious. Aversion therapy using electroshock works far more effectively than the kind of talk therapy practiced at Avenel, but court rulings have severely restricted the use of aversion therapy in public institutions. Edward Balyk, a clinical psychologist at Avenel, who specializes in biomedical treatments of sex disorders, sees a similarity among depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and the tendency to sexually offend. Some scientists believe that the offender's behavior can be managed with the use of serotonin supplements, like Prozac.

A therapy's success or failure seems to be strongly linked to a number of factors: whether the subject has committed more than one offense, whether the offender abuses drugs or alcohol, what his criminal and employment history has been, how much support he has received from his family, and how deeply committed he is to making a change in his life. Success rates also depend on the type of offense. Incestuous fathers are the best candidates, but they have the lowest rate of recidivism, even without treatment. Rapists (like Chapman), exhibitionists, and child molesters are extremely poor risks.

Moreover, the field of sex-offender treatment is full of radical, and sometimes bizarre, procedures, of questionable effectiveness. Virtually all these techniques have been used at Avenel; it was among the first facilities to use the penile plethysmograph, which is designed to measure sexual arousal. The plethysmograph is sometimes referred to as a sexual lie detector; at Avenel, it is known as the peter meter. A tubular ring filled with mercury is placed around a man's penis, in order to record changes in circumference that reflect the magnitude of erections as the offender is shown photographs of children in bondage or brutalized women.

Another technique is masturbatory reconditioning. "It's a form of behavior conditioning that attempts to change the patterns of arousal by deviant fantasies," William Plantier, the superintendent of Avenel, says. "There are two ways of doing it. In one case, the men masturbate whenever they have a deviant fantasy, in an attempt to satiate that behavior. The idea is to make them masturbate until they are so sore that it is no longer appealing to them. Another way is to have them masturbate to the point just short of ejaculation, then change to a non-deviant fantasy. Both types are utilized here. That's pretty much stock treatment these days in the sex-offender industry."

Some sex offenders are so driven that they masturbate ten or twenty times a day. "If someone is really fixated, there has to be a degree of reconditioning," Jackson says. "It sounds peculiar when you think about sex—which everybody likes to imagine to be so spontaneous—to say you can plan your fantasies. But these people *can* plan their fantasies and think about them in advance. Instead of relying on a simple sexual fantasy, which is what usually stimulates these men, they will try to develop a whole scenario—meeting a person, going out to dinner, actually having a decent conversation, sharing some history together, and then becoming intimate. That may be more than they have ever been able to experience in reality. If they can't imagine human interaction that can bring something besides pain, rejection, and rage, we're not going to get anywhere. We can't talk about masturbation in a context that doesn't involve those kinds of changes."

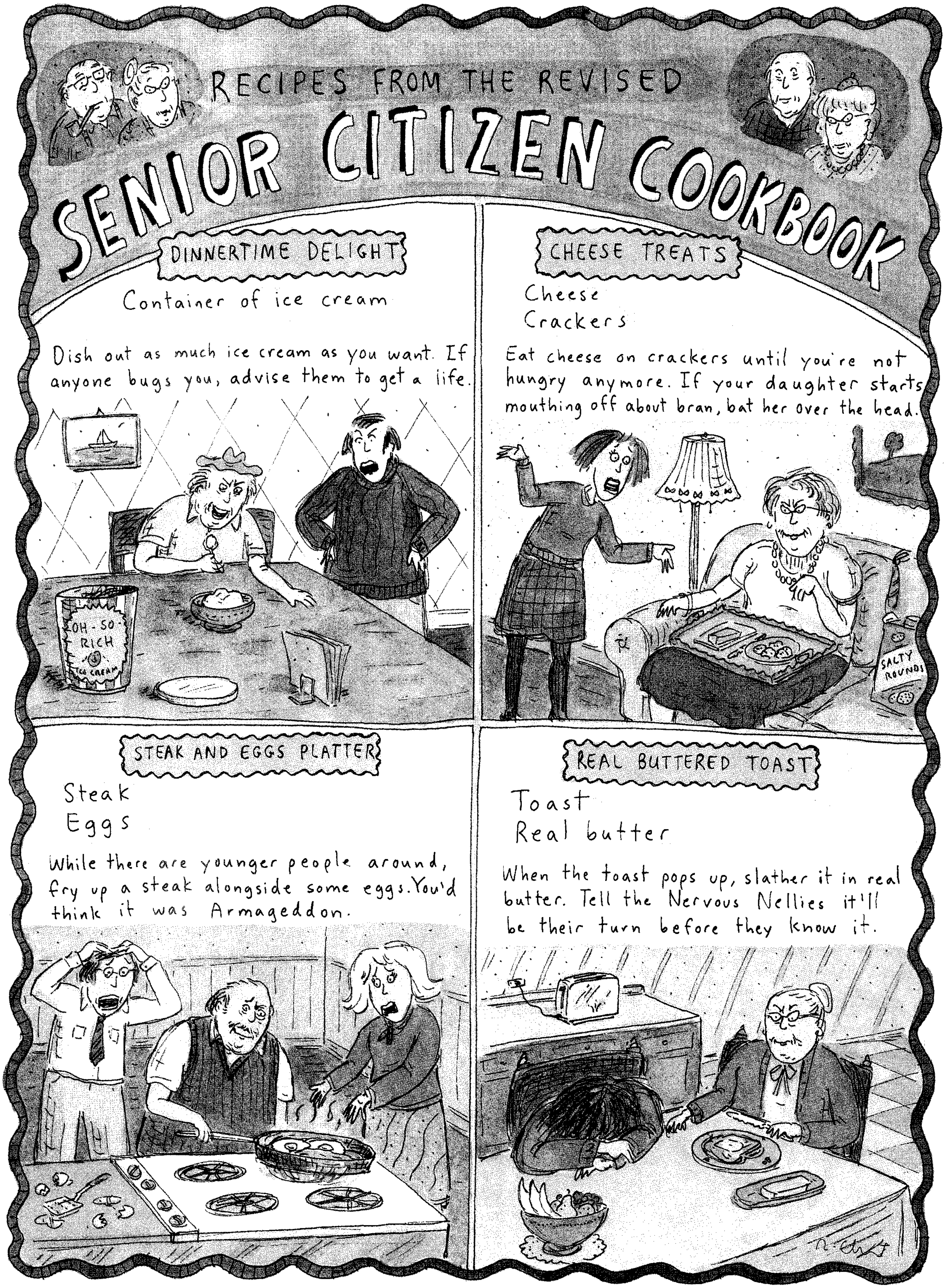
Even among Avenel's own therapists, there is no consensus on what works and what doesn't. (Twenty therapists work at the prison, ten men and ten women.) The therapists tend to be divided into the old school, which consists of straightforward psychotherapy and intensive confrontation, and the new school, which is called cognitive behaviorism. The new school aims at interrupting deviant thought patterns, in part by using such techniques as masturbatory reconditioning. Many offenders are quite ignorant of human sexuality, and so sex education becomes an important feature of their treatment. They also lack adequate communication skills, and that lack contributes to their feelings of rage and frustration. Through group therapy and instructional classes, the men are taught about themselves and about what constitutes normal sexual thinking, and are thus expected to develop strategies to help them escape their destructive cycles of behavior.

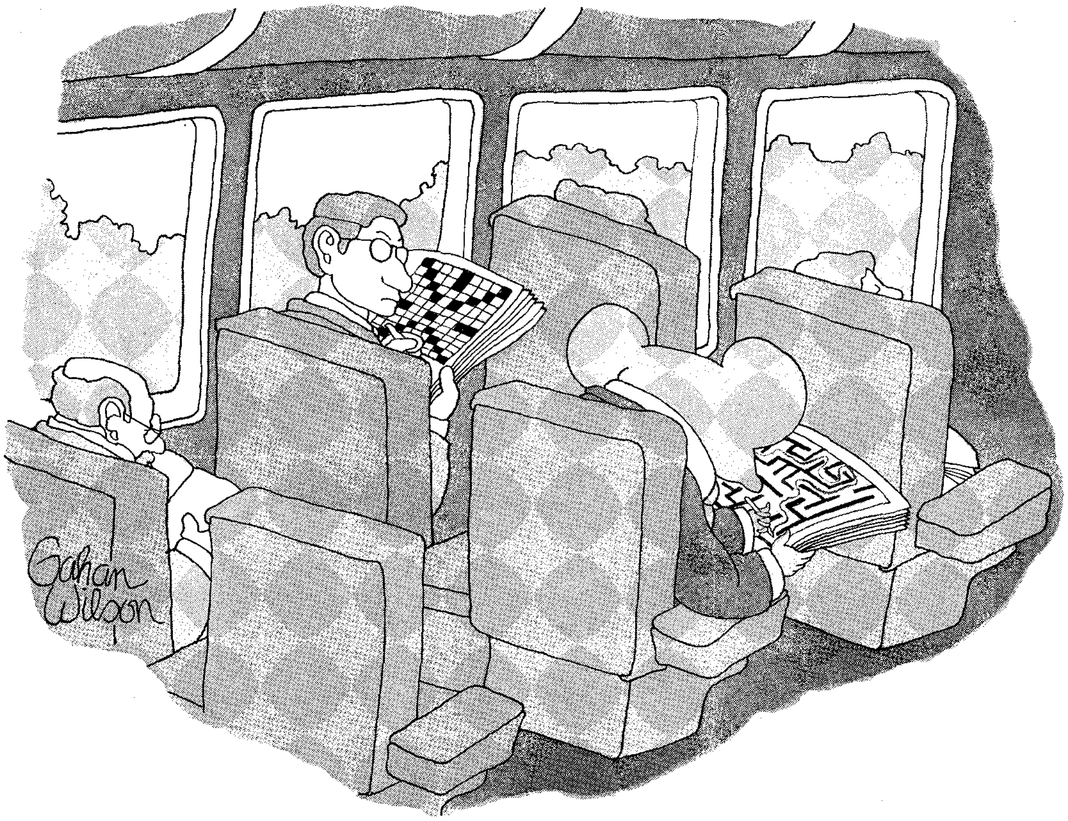
Kay Jackson uses some techniques of cognitive behaviorism, but on the whole she places herself in the old school. "Sex-offender treatment is a very primitive area," she concedes. "What I really believe changes people in the long term is not the technique but the therapeutic relationship. The wonderful thing about cognitive behaviorism is that it gives you the idea you really *know* something. You can have books and blackboards and homework and lesson plans; you can act as if this were a college campus—but obviously it's not. I implement a lot of it, but the risk is that you stay on the surface of somebody's pathology if you do not have a solid grounding in general psychotherapeutic skills. If you don't have that grounding, all the cognitive-behavioral skills in the world are not going to make you comfortable sitting in a room with twenty-five offenders."

Jackson has made some mistakes; in particular, she came to regret putting faith in a child molester and supporting him for parole, because he then molested his stepdaughter. "That taught me the difference between looking good and actually being in good shape," Jackson says. She has also been accused by other therapists of becoming "overly involved" with the men she treats. Part of what makes sex offenders so dangerous is their extraordinary powers of manipulation and seductiveness. Jackson is very much aware of the hazards of her relationships with such men. "There is often a period in treatment when you have a sexual attraction," Jackson says. But, if this happens, she will talk to her supervisor, or go to her own therapist. Also, she says, "I can open up the files and read the victim's statement. It's real sobering."

The strain of her job often leaves her emotionally spent. After work, she will get in her car, a weathered Toyota with an "Uppity Women Unite" bumper sticker, plug in a B. B. King tape, and turn the volume up to the point where the windows rattle. By the time she gets to her house, in Brooklyn, she is usually calm enough to take her two small children ice-skating or to ballet lessons. "I never brought my work home with me—I never even thought about it—until Chapman," she says.

ONE of the main objects of therapy, Jackson says, is to get the offender to acknowledge the wrongfulness of his actions and to admit that he is always in danger of reoffending. Recently, she allowed me to visit one of her group-therapy sessions. The session took place in a hot, airless room with a window slit at one end and a dim bulb overhead. There was just enough light to make out the forms of seventeen men, who were sitting in folding chairs or on pillows on a stained green carpet. They looked disconcertingly normal. Among the prisoners in Avenel are teach-


RECIPES FROM THE REVISED
SENIOR CITIZEN COOKBOOK
DINNERTIME DELIGHT
Container of ice cream
Dish out as much ice cream as you want. If anyone bugs you, advise them to get a life.
OH-SO RICH ICE CREAM
CHEESE TREATS
Cheese
Crackers
Eat cheese on crackers until you're not hungry anymore. If your daughter starts mouthing off about bran, bat her over the head.
SALTY ROUNDS
STEAK AND EGGS PLATTER
Steak
Eggs
While there are younger people around, fry up a steak alongside some eggs. You'd think it was Armageddon.
REAL BUTTERED TOAST
Toast
Real butter
When the toast pops up, slather it in real butter. Tell the Nervous Nellies it'll be their turn before they know it.
R. Chast



ers, doctors, priests, airline pilots, Scout leaders, and even former corrections officials—and few of them wear their pathology on their faces.

At the session I attended, an inmate whom I will call Rodney was the object of the group's attention. He was a slight black man, and he wore jogging shorts and a Nets T-shirt. He characterized his relationships with women by saying, "I am *the man*." He explained that "in my house the last say is mine." In previous groups, Rodney had apparently not been very forthcoming, and now several inmates tried to draw him out. "I stalked for fun," a huge blond man in the corner said. "You ever stalk for the hell of it?"

"No," Rodney replied uneasily.

"Are you still with us?" Jackson asked Rodney. "You look like you checked out."

"No, see, Kay, you got to understand me," Rodney explained. "I think I know everything."

A fat black man with wire-rimmed glasses spoke up: "For me, the pattern of rape begins with the women I'm living with—my wife and my mother. I feel sick of these bitches. The anger builds. Then, when the opportunity presents itself, I jump all over it."

"My pattern started when I was twelve," a white man in his sixties said. "I started burning down houses and rubbing up against people."

Rodney's obvious lack of interest in these testimonials seemed to set some of the men against him.

"What did you feel when you were raping?" a muscular man whose arms were blue with tattoos asked.

"Anger," Rodney replied.

"What else?"

"Lonely."

"What else?" the tattooed man asked. "What about the rush, the thrill? I was raping twenty-four hours a day."

Jackson guided the conversation back to Rodney's contention that he should have the last say. "Do you know how dangerous that attitude might be for a rapist to have?" she asked.

"It's not dangerous," Rodney said. The others hooted at him. "I don't think nobody gets what I'm saying," he complained.

"Rodney, we all keep this shit alive one way or another," the man with the tattoos said. "You keep it alive by telling yourself 'I get the last word.' "

Later in the session, the tall blond in the corner spoke up again. "Man, half of us in here are rapists," he declared. "We might not have walked your walk, but we've been there. I looked into my victims' eyes, I saw their fear. I was *the man!* But I tell you what, Rodney, I'm more of a man now."

"When I was on the street, I was a coward," Rodney admitted.

"That's what you say now," the tattooed muscleman countered. "Before, you felt the only way you could be a man was to rape. Now you see it's a cowardly thing to do, a cheap way to get your rocks off. But at the time of the rape we were all telling ourselves, 'I am the man.' "

A few minutes later, Jackson asked about Rodney's need to be always in control of his relationships.

"To have the last say," Rodney corrected her.

"So, it's Saturday night, and you want sex, and she doesn't," Jackson said. "What happens?"

"Go to bed," Rodney said.

"And you're still the man?" Jackson said. "What's wrong with this picture?"

"I heard what you said, dig, 'I gonna have the last say-so in my household,' " the fat black man said. "I hear you saying you're not getting credit for the fact that you can take a team and make them champions. You can go in the kitchen and cook without a cookbook. But you didn't get here because of that. You got here because you are a miserable scumbag rapist, and until you go back to that you ain't gonna get credit for anything else."

Rodney chewed over this lecture, and then quietly said, "Rape, if you experience it, you can always do it. I'll be a rapist till I die."

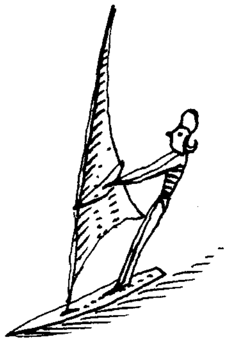
"Welcome to the group, Rodney," Jackson said.

As a free man again, Donald Chapman spent Sunday mornings going to the Wyckoff Reformed Church with his parents. According to one of the parishioners, the police team watching Chapman sat in a pew behind the family during the services. John Fahy, the Bergen County prosecutor, had decided after Jackson's initial phone call that he would keep Chapman under surveillance for thirty days, hoping to find some reason to take him off the streets. During the week, Chapman often went to a stationery store, and its employees say he spent his time there looking at pictures in hard-core pornographic magazines as the cops stood by, reading newspapers. On a typical day, Chapman also walked to the local Burger King, sometimes more than once. He invariably ordered a single large coffee and sat in the back, near the rest room, laughing to himself and writing in a small black book. Sometimes he stayed there for hours. There were many children in the restaurant, and his behavior was a source of increasing consternation.

Chapman often wandered into the ravine behind his house, with the three cops trailing behind. He had spent much of his youth there, and now he passed many hours skipping rocks in the stream and clearing brush from a pool below a waterfall. Chapman had always admired cops, and now they were practically the only people in Wyckoff who would speak to him. He alternately confided in his sentries and taunted them. Sometimes, they say, he talked to them about his fears of committing another crime; at other times, he teased them by bolting out the door of his parents' house and making them chase him down the street. The officers report that he once wondered aloud about the woman he had raped, saying that he wanted to know how she was doing. One night, the cops followed Chapman into the muddy ravine. He was carrying a heavy rope coiled over his shoulder. He suddenly spun around and threatened them. Chapman claims he did not know they were police officers. "If you get any closer, I'll bury this grappling hook in your head!" he cried. "You should see what it will do to a human brain."

Still, as far as the cops knew, Chapman had done nothing wrong since his release, and, in fact, his admitted fear of committing other crimes may have been a sign that his therapy had been effective. Meanwhile, police say, on several occasions he boasted about having eluded the surveillance team without their being aware of it, and he even suggested that if he did commit another crime the cops would provide his alibi, since they supposedly knew where he was at all times. (According to Basile, Chapman was only joking.) Fahy says that when he was told about this taunt "I almost went out of my mind—I realized we really could end up giving him an alibi." Fahy felt that the situation was getting out of hand. "I thought that I had this knowledge, my investigators had this knowledge, but other people in the community did not," Fahy says. "If this guy ended up raping or killing somebody in the neighborhood, I would have a tough time living with myself."

On December 19th, a month after Chapman left Avenel, Kay Jackson was at home in Brooklyn when the telephone rang. "They're talking about Kay on TV," a friend told Sam. Jackson was appalled to hear excerpts from her confidential memo about Donald Chapman being read aloud on the news. Fahy had distributed to the press a legal motion—a request for a court order for Chapman's father to surrender several guns—which was based on Jackson's confidential memo and on other documents that Fahy's office had obtained. "Quite a few friends called to say they'd seen quotes from Kay on television," Sam says. "They had all heard Kay's name. The reports gave the impression that Kay had violated ethical protocol by giving interviews. They kept repeating, 'Kay Jackson says.' I felt very concerned about her safety. Chapman was a guy she already felt was dangerous, and now he had been given an enemy."



Jackson had always felt that there was an important difference between notifying the authorities and alerting the community. Many states require only that offenders register with the authorities, reasoning that wider notification—such as alerting local media, posting handbills with an offender's photograph, and knocking on the doors of people in the neighborhood—invites a hysterical response and incites vigilantism. Indeed, this has happened in Washington State: sex offenders there have been assaulted, and one offender's house was burned. Fahy and others in the Bergen County prosecutor's office had decided that the community had a right to know of Chapman's presence, and that this right outweighed Chapman's right to be left alone. Fahy made no attempt to shield Jackson's name. "That would have come out anyway," he says in defense of his action. Whether that is true or not, Fahy's action pushed Jackson into the forefront of a seething public debate. It was a role that she had certainly never sought. "The prosecutor had just given confidential documents to the press and basically hung Kay out to dry," Sam Johnson says. "Of course, it had the desired impact. The community went nuts."

It was the Christmas season. The porch of the Chapman house was decorated with a wreath, and poinsettias lined the windowsills. Immediately after the prosecutor released his motion to the press, parents yanked their kids off the streets, and reporters descended upon the Chapmans' front yard. A local paper carried a prison photograph of Chapman, with his long hair and beard, under the headline "PSYCHO SAYS HE'LL KILL NEXT TIME." Shortly after his release, Chapman had got a haircut and shaved off his beard, but now everyone knew him by sight: he was the person who was always being followed by a cluster of plainclothes cops. Television crews staked out the house and interviewed the neighbors, some of whom went on talk shows such as "Geraldo" and "Oprah" to air their fears. When the Bergen *Record* published a color photograph of the Chapmans' house on the front page, the family had the house painted blue. "We raised our family here, and now we can't make a move without feeling like we're under a microscope," Chapman's father told the Wyckoff *News*. Donald Chapman received two anonymous letters threatening to kill him. Chapman's mother began having problems with her blood pressure. At one point, his father, who was eighty, hit a photographer with a shoe. When a carload of teen-agers drove slowly past the house again and again, Chapman ran out and pounded on the car windows, yelling at the kids, "You want trouble? I'll give you trouble."

Vincent Basile says that all of Chapman's actions after his release from Avenel have innocent explanations, and that his outbursts reflected the reasonable responses of a man who was followed by police twenty-four hours a day, hounded by the press, and subjected to intense media scrutiny. He argues that the police, who were upset by Kay Jackson's dire warnings and were eager to view anything that Chapman did in the most negative light, repeatedly jumped to false conclusions. Basile says that the videotape that shows Chapman wearing rubber gloves was taken when he was using wood stain on a woodworking project, and Chapman denies that he ever gathered tools in preparation for committing a crime. Regarding the rope that Chapman was handling in the videotape, Basile says, "It was innocuous. I've seen the tape, and the rope is two to three inches in diameter—it was tree-moving equipment, not clothesline or twine."

Despite the hostility in Wyckoff, kindnesses were shown to the Chapmans by some of their neighbors. On Christmas Eve, friends brought food, and a man who lived on their street came to the door with flowers. Basile also dropped by. There were police cars and a surveillance van outside the house. "It was like a command post," Basile says. "I hadn't seen that much equipment since Vietnam." Basile told the Chapmans that there was reason to be hopeful. None of the psychiatrists who had examined their son had been willing to commit him to a mental institution against his will. Basile was certain that the county could not afford to keep up the surveillance, which was costing two thousand dollars a day, and that the hysteria would eventually die down. He said he even had a former client who was willing to offer Donald a job. The Chapmans seemed encouraged. "I felt that this was going to end soon," Basile says.

IN the meantime, although some of the inmates Kay Jackson worked with at Avenel applauded her actions, other inmates were accusing her of betrayal. "I can never trust you again," one man said. "Did you use what Chapman said in group against him? Are you going to try to involuntarily confine *me*?" Jackson explained that the difference between Chapman and the other inmates was her conviction that he would reoffend once he got outside. She now says, "I never encountered this problem before I dealt with Chapman. I never before sought to have an inmate involuntarily committed."

At the request of Robert J. Del Tufo, the state's attorney general at that time, Jackson went to Trenton to meet with him and discuss the Chapman case. Two psychiatrists, Stanley Kern and Terrance Chamberlain, also attended the meeting, along with several members of Del Tufo's staff. The discussion turned on what to do with a person who, as Del Tufo puts it, "may not be a psychotic, but is a sociopath and out of control." The law allows a person to be committed to a mental hospital if it is determined that the person is mentally ill and poses a threat to himself or others. To the lawyers in the room, it seemed bizarre that someone like Chapman did not qualify on both counts. The psychiatrists explained that much had changed in the decades since that law was written; in particular, many mental patients have been deinstitutionalized because of court rulings that a person whose behavior can be controlled with medication does not require commitment. Dr. Kern explains, "There used to be a rubber-stamp commitment"—in other words, the judge simply took the doctor's word that a person needed to be locked up. Now, Kern says, there are screening centers and mandatory procedures that prevent such unilateral action. In the old days, Kern says, "somebody was committed to a hospital and would stay until a doctor released him." Now there are reviews at least once a year that examine the continuing need for confinement.

Psychiatrists have become far more reluctant in recent years to predict future dangerousness. No matter how convinced Jackson was that Chapman would reoffend within thirty days, her assertion was difficult to support. In any case, how dangerous does a person have to be before the state presumes to take away his liberty? Different states have different answers to this question. In the end, the New Jersey attorney general obtained a temporary restraining order to have Chapman submit to two more psychiatric evaluations.

In Wyckoff, Chapman continued to make his rounds. Though Chapman denies it, the police say that he approached a mother and father in the Burger King, telling them that they had a beautiful daughter and should be proud. To the clerks in the stationery store, Chapman seemed particularly brazen. They claim that he would sometimes spend an hour looking at porn magazines, then buy a propitiatory forty-cent roll of Sweetarts. Reports of actions like these, which might seem unremarkable in another person who was lonely and unemployed, had a galvanizing effect on a community that was already buzzing with rumors and apprehensive gossip. On January 5, 1993, Chapman bought a copy of the *Daily News*, which had a front-page photograph of him under the headline "RAPE FEAR." He read the story. It quoted Jackson as saying that Chapman had admitted to "continuing sexual arousal to sadistic fantasies involving rape, torture and mutilation." Jackson's quotation came from the documents Fahy had released to the press. Chapman slammed his fist against a stone pillar. "My life is terrible," Chapman told the Wyckoff *News* on January 13th (in the only interview that he has given). "I'm on sedatives and I feel like I can't do anything anymore. . . . I can't get a job. I can't make friends and I can't go out to meet anyone—even if I wanted a girlfriend I couldn't get away from here to meet one without being followed." He blamed Kay Jackson for all the unwanted attention. "It's just not right," he said. "I've served my time and now I should just be left alone."

Both Basile and Fahy tried to find a halfway house or some other residential facility for sex offenders where Chapman could receive further treatment. But they were unable to find such a facility in New Jersey, and several programs in other states turned Chapman down. In the meantime, Chapman's father began driving him to Paterson once a week for a group-therapy program run by Avenel therapists.

Chapman never left New Jersey, although nothing was legally keeping him in the state. "I said to him, 'Don, why don't you just move to Wyoming?' " Lieutenant John Casson, of the Midland Park Police Department, recalls. "I said, 'You've done your time, so you're not on parole. You like animals. Go somewhere they don't know you. Work on a farm.' " Chapman did consider that option but was apparently unwilling to leave the security of his home.

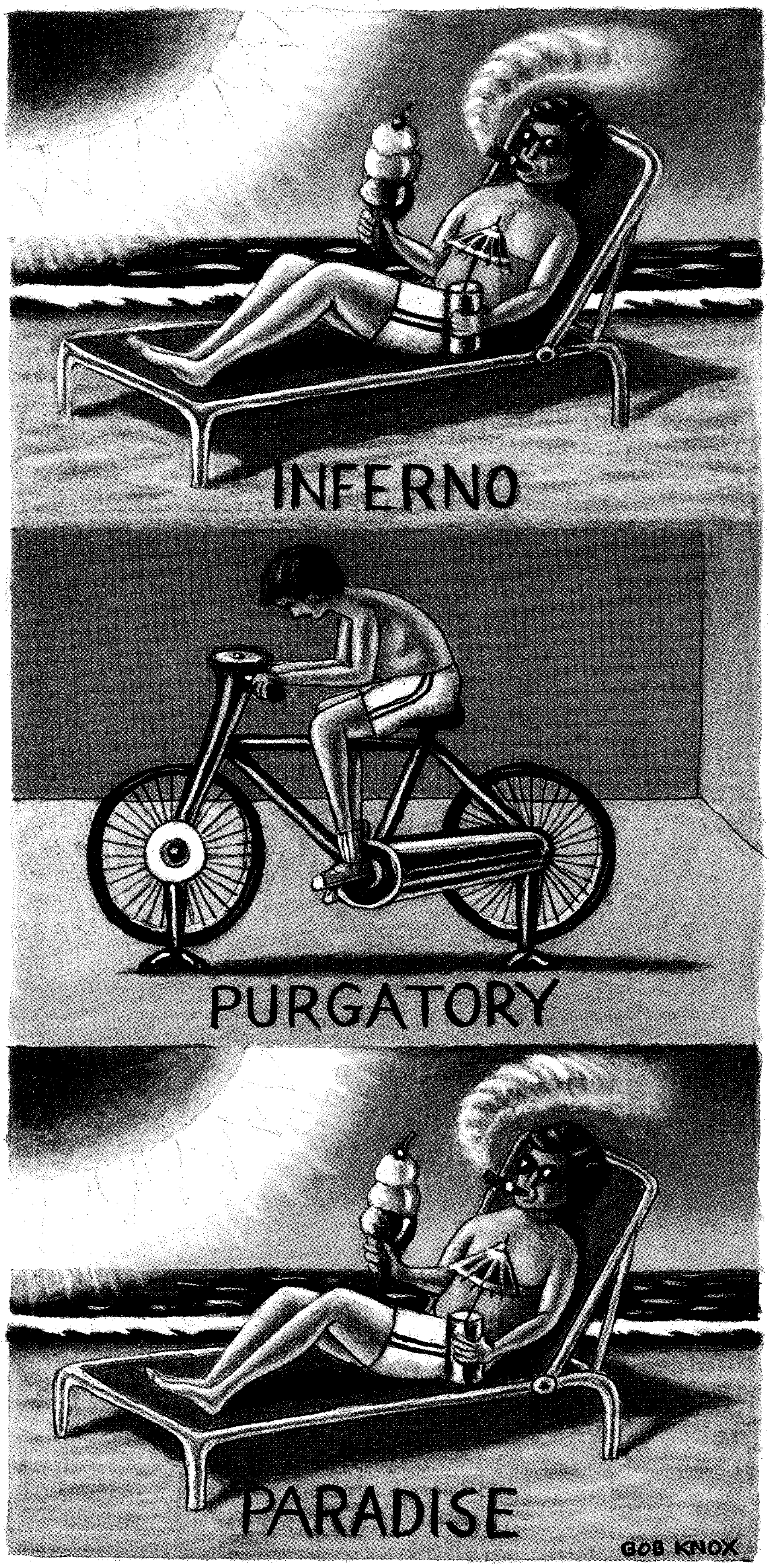
After New Year's, Kern and Chamberlain, the psychiatrists examining Chapman on behalf of the state, found him to be dangerous, although only Chamberlain concluded that he was mentally ill. Based on this rather ambiguous finding, Judge Peter Ciolino, of Bergen County Superior Court, ordered on January 21, 1993, that Chapman be taken back into custody and sent to Bergen Pines County Hospital for a more complete examination. When Chapman heard the news, he showed little emotion. "How are you going to tell my mother?" he asked Basile. His mother had been hospitalized for high blood pressure, and he asked Basile to have someone talk to a doctor before breaking the news. Chapman had been a free man for only two months.

Even outside Chapman's family, there was a growing perception that he was being unfairly treated. The American Civil Liberties Union declared that Chapman's rights were being ignored in the rush to protect society. "If you go to enough doctors, you get the opinion you want," Marsha Wenk, the legal director of the A.C.L.U. in New Jersey, told a reporter. "At what point does it violate due process?" Nor was it only civil libertarians who felt this way. Some of the police officers who knew Chapman were uncomfortable about the campaign to have him committed. "If the system failed society and made his sentence too short, then shame on the system," Lieutenant Casson says. "It's easy for me to say, because my child wasn't molested and my wife wasn't tied to a tree. But, I'm sorry, you can't make things retroactive—you can't punish Donald Chapman just because we have a failed system." A number of mental-health professionals suggested that lawmakers were trying to use civil-commitment laws in order to circumvent the criminal-justice system. "When we talk about institutionalizing incurable sex offenders in order to keep them from harming other people—that's what prisons are for, not psychiatric hospitals," says Dr. Daniel Greenwald, who is a former president of the New Jersey Psychiatric Association. "How about a perpetually repetitive bank robber, or a compulsive thief—don't they become mentally ill? Under the kind of definition that the lawyers want to have, almost anybody who is a compulsive, repetitive criminal is mentally ill."

The Chapman dispute has divided both the psychiatric community and the legal community. Neither the criminal-justice system nor the mental-health system knows what to do with sex offenders, and neither wants to bear the responsibility for treating them. Dr. Peter Martindale, the medical director of the psychiatric division of Bergen Pines County Hospital, believes that civil commitment of people with personality disorders—which includes an enormous number of criminals—would amount to "preventive detention." Alexander D. Brooks, a professor emeritus at Rutgers University Law School, in Newark, who has written extensively about the Washington State law on sexual predators, says that the psychiatrists are missing the point. "For the entire history of this country, we've engaged in preventive detention," Brooks says. "Mental hospitals already confine thousands of mentally ill people who are thought to be too dangerous to be at large. It's only when they start applying the term 'preventive detention' to sex offenders that it is seen as a novelty." In any case, he says, "the alternative is to let these people commit rapes and child torture and abuse."

The hearing on whether to commit Chapman took place over four days in

THE DANTE SYNDROME



February, 1993, inside a small courtroom in Bergen Pines presided over by Judge Ciolino. After eighteen days of observation, Dr. Martindale testified that Chapman had an anti-social personality disorder: he was a sexual sadist, but he was not mentally ill. The state's expert witnesses disagreed. Finally, another psychiatrist, testifying for the defense, asserted that there were no grounds for committing him. By then, eight psychiatrists had examined Chapman, and only one had described him as both mentally ill and an immediate threat to others. On February 19th, Judge Ciolino committed Chapman to the custody of the state mental-health department, and it sent him to the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital, in Trenton, where New Jersey houses its violent mentally ill. (According to Basile, Chapman's behavior in the hospital, where he has spent the past two and a half years, has been exemplary. A spokesperson at Trenton Forensic would not comment on Chapman's record, citing hospital rules on confidentiality.)

Two years later, in April, 1995, the New Jersey Appellate Division reversed Chapman's commitment, ruling that the state did not have the right to seek another psychiatric evaluation of Chapman, after previous psychiatrists had examined him and determined that he was not mentally ill. "The commitment statute provides no right to appeal a determination that an individual is not mentally ill," the court declared.

"That was Donald's happiest moment in this whole torturous two and a half years," Basile says. It wasn't a complete victory, however. The day after the ruling, the court granted a request by the attorney general that Chapman be confined until the New Jersey Supreme Court hears the state's appeal. "Why am I still here if I'm being held unlawfully?" Chapman asked his attorney. "When am I going to be allowed to get on with my life?"

SINCE Chapman was committed, in February, 1993, the legal landscape in New Jersey has changed. In July, 1994, seven-year-old Megan Kanka crossed the street to see a neighbor's puppy. Megan, who lived in Hamilton Township, a suburb of Trenton, didn't come home. A neighbor, Jesse Timmendequas, who was then thirty-three, allegedly confessed to raping and asphyxiating Megan, and burying the body behind a soccer field. Timmendequas, who has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial, had spent six years in Avenel for molesting and attempting to murder another little girl. Even the inmates considered the sentence to be shockingly lenient. They say that he spent most of his time hanging around the exercise yard, largely refusing to participate in treatment.

Megan was one of four little girls in New Jersey who were sexually assaulted and murdered within the span of a year and a half. Her death proved to be a legal and legislative landmark. Within days of Megan's murder, a thousand people turned out for a vigil in a park near her home; within weeks, more than two hundred thousand New Jerseyans had signed a petition demanding that government officials notify communities when a sex offender moves into the neighborhood; and within three months Governor Christine Todd Whitman had signed a package of ten bills, many of which had originally been proposed to deal with Chapman. Collectively called Megan's Law, they establish a registry of sex offenders and require community notification for those offenders deemed to be the most likely to commit further crimes. There are extended sentences for some types of sex offenses, and there is lifetime community supervision, similar to parole, even for offenders who have served their entire prison sentences. Certain offenders are required to provide the state with samples of their blood, so that a record of their DNA can be kept on file. One of the provisions makes civil commitment easier by redefining mental illness to include a disturbance of thought which significantly impairs the "capacity to control" behavior. That ambiguous definition could be construed to include every man in Avenel, since each has been found to be a repetitive and compulsive sex offender. Another provision of Megan's Law requires the superintendent of Avenel to notify the state attorney general and the county prosecutor before an offender is released, and to offer an opinion on whether the offender should be civilly committed. It is then up to the attorney general or the local prosecutor to decide whether to seek commitment. The object is to shield therapists like Jackson from having to bear the responsibility for making those decisions.

All over the country, states are passing legislation similar to Megan's Law. In fact, federal law now requires states to enact such registration laws or else lose certain federal funds. So far, forty-four states require sex offenders to register with authorities when they move into a community. Fifteen states now have laws allowing indefinite civil commitment of sex offenders to state mental institutions, while at least five have proposals for similar legislation. The constitutionality of such legislation is under challenge, however. So far, the New Jersey Supreme Court has not ruled on the provision of Megan's Law that redefines mental illness in order to facilitate civil commitment of potentially dangerous offenders.

In addition, twenty-seven states now have community-notification statutes. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in July that the state's notification statute did not violate the constitutional rights of sex offenders. But, as in the earlier incidents, in Washington State, the potential for abuse of the law became clear. Soon after it went into effect, a man in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, was beaten by vigilantes who mistakenly thought he was a child molester.

WHAT rights does the community have to be protected against the possibility that Chapman—or any sex offender—might strike again? Can we confine such men because of their fantasies? "I can't sell anybody on the idea that Donald's a saint," Basile says. "But, regardless of that, it's an absolutely frightening proposition that a person in this country can be detained two and a half years."

Even if you believe that Donald Chapman is too dangerous to be let out into the community, then which of the seven hundred and forty other pedophiles and rapists in Avenel are not? For that matter, why treat sex offenders differently from other dangerous criminals? Murderers get out of prison every day and drift into communities without any of the attention that sex offenders receive; they are not subjected to community notification, as the public demands that sex offenders be. "But most murderers are not compulsive," Fahy, the Bergen County prosecutor, says. "I think sex offenders should be given fewer rights, because the recidivism rate is so high for compulsive behavior, and because the harm they do is so great—especially the pedophiles."

Jackson thinks that the community-notification aspect of Megan's Law is "a disaster." She says, "It is well intentioned, but harmful in many different ways. It seems to me that 'outing' sex offenders who are well adjusted and are back in the community violates anything resembling their rights. I have people who have been out on parole ten years, who own homes, who have businesses, and haven't been a problem. It doesn't seem fair that their lives should be completely turned upside down." Given Jackson's views, it is paradoxical that she came to embody the whole question of notification in New Jersey when she decided to report Donald Chapman.

"Are you in a Miyake or did you just sleep in your dress?"

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On November 1, 1994, the day after Governor Whitman signed Megan's Law, a legislative task force went to Avenel to examine its treatment program and to determine how it should be reformed. After a number of hearings over the next six months, several members of the task force concluded that Avenel should be closed altogether. "Practically everybody felt that the two million dollars a year being spent on therapy at Avenel was money down the drain," Professor Brooks, who was a member of the task force, says.

Kay Jackson testified about the difficulty of judging who is ready for parole. "When I participate in releasing an offender, I do so with the knowledge, as a parent of two children and as a female, that he could be going into my back yard," she said. "At the same time, I don't believe that it is useful to have people serving sentences with absolutely no hope of parole."

Several months ago, the task force submitted its recommendations to the Governor. Among its proposals were reducing the inmate population of Avenel; restoring indeterminate sentencing; requiring mandatory aftercare for sex offenders who have been released; and privatizing the therapy staff. If any of these proposals are acted on, however, they may not affect Kay Jackson. She is considering the idea of leaving her full-time position at Avenel, and she has been asked to join a private practice in Manhattan that treats sex offenders, most of whom are on parole or on probation. She says that she is fed up with bureaucratic squabbles and is overburdened by her caseload. "A person has to be realistic about the job offers that come along," she says. "This one happened to come at a moment when I was thinking of going."

She has read the proposals of the task force, and although she agrees with most of them, she doesn't think they go far enough. "Avenel should become an entirely voluntary program," she says. "A huge number of men inside this prison have worked very hard, and I know they will make a good adjustment when they get out. And then there are people who are very fragile, and who we know will be back. I personally think that for them the legislators should throw away the key. They should get one shot at treatment, and that's it. At one time, I thought I knew what should be done with Avenel, but now I'm a little older and wiser, and humble enough to say I don't know. I just don't know."

In the meantime, Donald Chapman waits in Trenton Forensic. He is now, according to his attorney, "a balding, paunchy, middle-aged man"—not a monster of supernatural strength, as the community perceives him. This January, he filed suit against the State of New Jersey, the state attorney general, the Bergen County prosecutor's office, John Fahy, the Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center at Avenel, and Kay Jackson. Chapman claims that Jackson and the other parties named in the suit violated his constitutional rights, including his right to privacy, by revealing confidential medical information, and that they conspired to improperly deprive him of his freedom. The suit is pending.

As for Chapman's other case—the one in which he is fighting civil commitment—the New Jersey Supreme Court may hear the state's appeal of the lower court's decision this fall. "I think the chances that he'll get out are probably quite good," Jackson says. Even under Megan's Law, the state has to show that Chapman's present mental condition significantly impairs his capacity to control his behavior. But for the past three years Chapman has been under intense scrutiny, and he has committed no crimes. Of course, he hasn't had the opportunity to commit any, either.

In Wyckoff and surrounding towns, flyers with Chapman's picture on them have been posted in store windows. "Warning!!" they say. "May Be Released Soon." ♦

LIFE AND LETTERS

REMEMBERING ROBERT GRAVES

He was considered by many to be a poet's poet.
Or was he just a bit mad—and after love for its own sake?

BY ALASTAIR REID

HAD he lived, Robert Graves would have been a hundred years old this past July; as it happened, he died at ninety, in November of 1985, in the village of Deyá, on the rocky northwestern coast of Majorca, where he had made his home for half of his long life, and where I first met him, in the summer of 1953. We enjoyed a close friendship, in the form of an endless conversation, until it was abruptly and irretrievably severed in 1961. Very seldom do I think of those years, but I was considerably formed and changed by them. This year, Graves's name is very much in the air, with three biographies, a documentary film, an endearing memoir of him by his son William, symposia on his work, and an act of homage by the Majorcan government. Carcanet Press, in Britain, is to reprint most of his work—an eight-year project, since he published more than a hundred and thirty books in his lifetime. His life and his writings so interact that they cannot be unravelled: writing was how he lived.

The English have always kept Graves at a distance, as if he were an offshore island, out of the mainstream—something they quite often do with English writers who choose to live elsewhere and are still successful. Even so, he is now firmly lodged in literary history, and critics may write of him without incurring one of his famously withering broadsides. Those who know his work well probably think first of his poetry; many people, however, know his name only from the television version of "I, Claudius." Generally, the book of his that first springs to mind is "Good-bye to All That," the autobiography he produced in 1929, out of a time of great personal stress.

Never was a title more fervently meant: as he put it, the book dealt with "what I was, not what I am." Its tone is one of blunt irreverence; by writing it, he was shedding his past, and turning his back on England and what he saw as the hypocrisy of its values and public institutions. He wrote it as one who had survived the tyrannies of conventional schooling and the dehumanizing horrors of the trenches, and no book of his did more to imprint his name on the attention of the public. He fled England just before it was published, leaving behind him a past he had chosen to renounce, even though he had already been irrevocably formed by it.

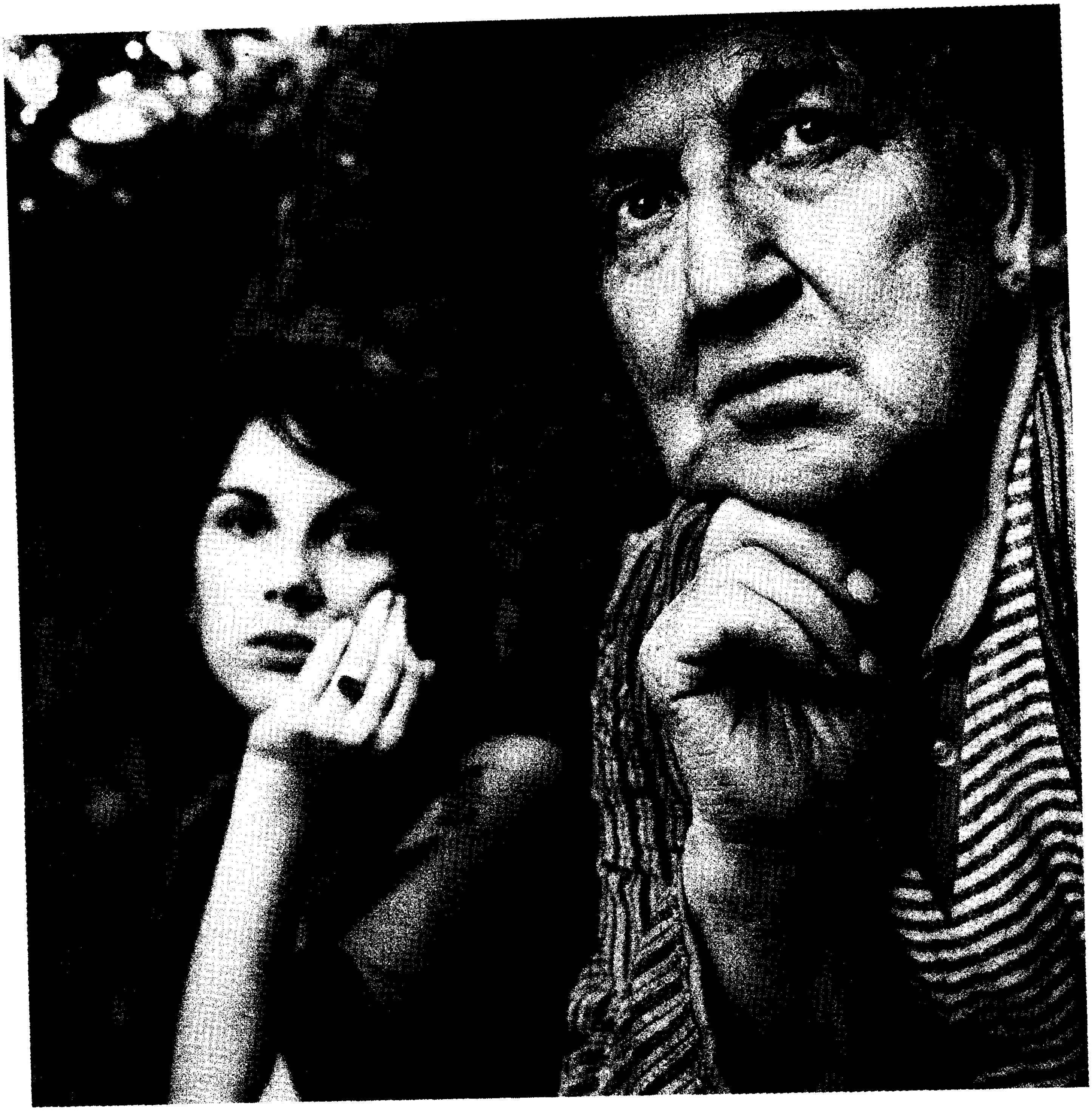
Graves had an Irish father, a German mother, a Scottish grandmother, a patrician English upbringing, a Welsh predilection, and a classical education. His whole personality formed itself from a mass of oppositions, of contraries. His father, a minor poet and a celebrated writer of Irish songs, worked as a school inspector in London. A widower left with five children to look after, he remarried, in 1891, a grandniece of the German historian Leopold von Ranke, and this genetic connection was one that Graves often invoked. Narrow-minded and pious both, his mother imposed a stern morality on her husband and children, and saddled Robert with a moral scrupulousness that left him socially inept and ill-prepared for the rigors of an English public school. In 1909, Graves was sent to Charterhouse, where his middle name, von Ranke, occasioned general derision, even outright persecution, as did his piety and his priggishness about sex. Although studies were not fashionable at Charterhouse, he took refuge in them. He left school just as the First World War was breaking out, and some ten days later he enlisted with a commission in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. Not yet twenty, he was in France, and at the front, amid the running horror of death and decay every fearful day. In July, 1916, at the beginning of the Somme offensive, Graves was wounded by shrapnel, four days before he turned twenty-one; shortly afterward, the notice of his death from wounds appeared in the London *Times*.

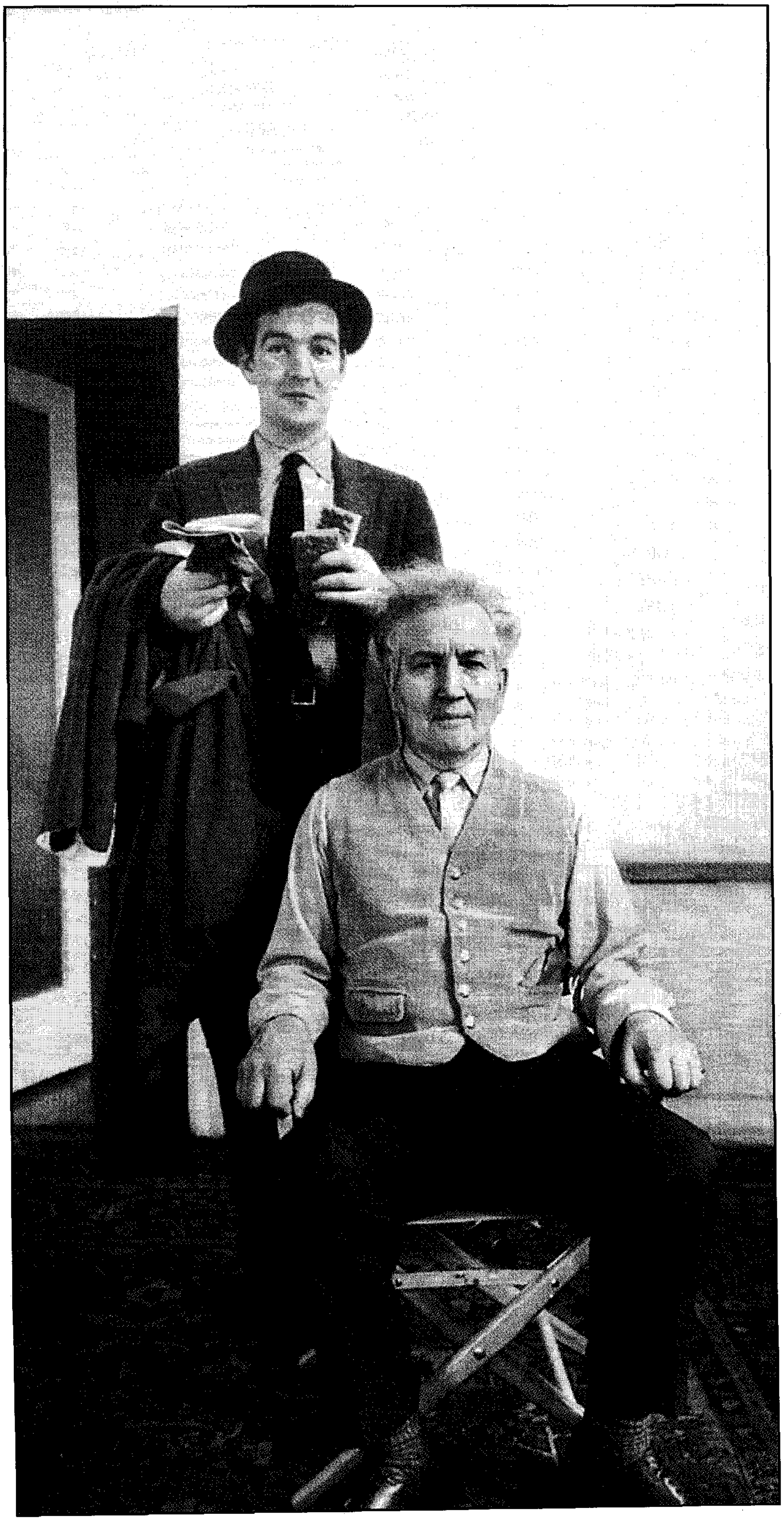
He talked to me often about the war. My father had been wounded in the same battle: my mother kept in a small box the bullet that had been taken from his lung; I could scarcely hold it. Graves told me once that he considered himself exceptionally lucky in knowing that nothing that happened to him afterward could ever match the horror that he had gone through in the trenches.

The war left Graves in a precarious state, shell-shocked and suffering from severe war neurosis. It was during this time that Graves, accompanying his close friend Siegfried Sassoon to neurasthenic treatment, met the presiding physician, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, who had once been an anthropologist and was now a neurologist. After the war, Graves continued to visit him in Cambridge, where Rivers was a professor. Rivers planted in Graves's mind an interest in matriarchal societies and woman rule, which would later find fuller expression in his controversial work "The White Goddess." More im-

PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

Robert Graves and his daughter Lucia, Majorca, 1962.





Alastair Reid and Robert Graves posing for a photographer during a 1958 United States lecture tour.

COURTESY OF HENRY HOLT, FROM "ROBERT GRAVES: LIFE ON THE EDGE";

mediately, Rivers made Graves see that his cure was in writing: that the unconscious was the source not only of his nightmares but also of his creativity. He urged Graves to use his poetry to explore his pain. I think Rivers did more than anyone to show Graves just how his life and art were essentially connected. From that time on, Graves wrote whenever he could, wherever he was, convinced that in poetry lay a hope of sanity but at the same time suspecting that his "insanity" made his poetry possible: were he to be entirely sane, his creativity might dry up. He needed his madness, his nerve. The poetry was in the pain.

While Graves was still in the Army, he abruptly proposed marriage, after short acquaintance, to Nancy Nicholson, then eighteen, sister of Ben Nicholson, the painter. She had strong feminist opinions for her day and refused to assume the married name of Graves (her two girls bear the Nicholson surname, her two boys that of Graves). Now a civilian and without qualifications or money, Graves elected to go to Oxford and eventually read for a degree in literature in the hope that it might lead to a teaching post. Money remained a recurring problem, although he and Nancy were full of plans as to how to earn it.

They were mired in domesticity; he shopped, cooked, washed, attended to the children, and wrote furiously all the time. By now he and Nancy had become more comrades than lovers, joined in a constant money worry. Enthralled by some poems of a young American poet he had read in *The Fugitive*, Graves had begun to correspond with their author, Laura Riding. They exchanged literary opinions, and Graves, impressed by her intelligence and her near-belligerent confidence, invited her to join Nancy and him to work with them. She arrived in England in early 1926, and for the next thirteen years she was to dominate Graves's existence, to prove his nemesis.

LAURA RIDING'S influence on those who knew her owes more to her emphatic presence than to her writings, although it would have meant death to say it to her. I have known seven people who were close to her during her time with Graves, and something of the same dazed and faraway look came into their eyes whenever they spoke of her. Certain of her own supreme worth and intelligence, certain that her poetry was bringing a new clarity to language, Riding felt her work had been too sparsely appreciated at home, and she accepted Graves's invitation, hoping to find in Europe some like-minded souls. Graves had accepted a post lecturing on English literature in Cairo, and a week after her arrival in England Laura embarked for Egypt with the entire family, who already regarded her as an essential presence. The stay in Egypt proved less than fruitful, and after four months Graves resigned, and sailed, with the family, back to England. He was entranced by Laura. Where Graves wrestled with dualities, Laura was single-mindedly certain. The ferocity of her judgments occasionally verged on cruelty. To Graves, she was at once a demanding mentor, a clarifier, and a stimulating collaborator, utterly without doubts. He was also deeply in love with her. At first, he and Laura and Nancy declared themselves The Trinity and lived together. Soon, however, he moved to London to work there with Laura. Graves saw Laura's coming into his life, through poetry, as a magical event; he could do nothing but accept it.

The continuing story of Robert and Laura is a turbulent one, often painful, sometimes touching the edge of madness. Graves bore it stoically: the break with Nancy and the children, a rival for Laura's affections, her suicide leap from an upper window and her convalescence. In October of 1929, he and Laura left England behind, and made their way eventually to Majorca. The success of "Good-bye to All That" had shown Graves a way to survive as a poet. He said often that he bred show dogs in order to be able to afford a cat. The dogs were prose; the cat was poetry. Thanks to his show dogs, he was able to buy land and build a house, and to start up with Laura a small colony of clarity and literary industry in Deyá, which she ruled by will and whim. Graves now gave way to her entirely, declaring her work far above his. In 1933, he wrote the two Claudius novels, and they came out to great acclaim the following year. Laura disparaged them, although they were the source of all funds; he begged his friends never to mention any of his work in front of her, and in new publishing contracts he insisted that a work of hers be published along with his. He discussed endlessly with Laura his growing interest in goddess worship. To it she added the vehemence of her own ideas, and soon she became to Graves not simply critic and mentor and lover and poet but muse. Later, she claimed to have been the source of all Graves's notions of poetry as goddess worship. She was not. She was much more: she was their incarnation.

By 1936, the Spanish Civil War was looming and, as foreign residents, Robert and Laura were given the choice of leaving immediately on a British destroyer from Palma, the capital of Majorca, or remaining to take their chances on an island that had shown itself to be predominantly pro-Franco. They left, and the Spanish frontier closed behind them. Although Graves went back to England, it was no longer his country. Any return to Spain seemed unlikely, war in Europe being nearly inevitable. The couple felt themselves fugitives, refugees; relations between them had grown more distant, although Graves remained unswervingly loyal to Laura. A sign came in the form of an adulatory mention of her poems in *Time* by one Schuyler Jackson, a friend of a friend of Graves. Intrigued, Laura abruptly decided to return to America; arrangements were made, and Graves found himself in early 1939 accompanying her to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where the Jacksons had a farm. Again, events took several savage turns. Laura assumed what she considered her rightful place at the center of the magic circle, and took upon herself the rearranging of the lives around her. Jackson's wife was declared a witch and driven to breakdown. Graves was given his notice as collaborator and champion. She and Jackson were eventually to marry and move to Florida. Broken in spirit, Graves returned to England just as war was breaking out in Europe.

Graves never saw Laura again, yet he remained forever mesmerized by her: if her name came up in conversation, he would frequently go silent, slipping into a trance of memory. His rejection by Laura had wounded him deeply, but he refused to speak ill of her. In any case, he had found refuge in a new love. Alan Hodge, then a young poet and later Graves's valued collaborator, had brought his young wife, Beryl, into the circle, and they followed Laura and Robert to America. As the dramas unfolded, Robert found in Beryl's company a quiet, cool sanity that he badly needed, and a devotion to which he was not slow to respond. With Alan Hodge's eventual blessing, Beryl joined Robert in England, and she never left him. War had broken out, uncertainties loomed, but Graves settled down with Beryl in the Devon countryside, and for the next six years he poured out work—writing poems, producing historical novels for which he did prodigious reading, and collaborating with Alan Hodge on a crisp, eminently sensible, and often humorous study of English prose style, called "The Reader Over Your Shoulder," the most useful of all his books, as he said. His life with Beryl was calm and sustaining; it was also spiced by her humor—something Graves had not enjoyed for some time.

GRAVES has described how, at his desk in early 1944, he felt a sudden surge of illumination, and began feverishly writing the manuscript that was to be published as "The White Goddess." Subtitled "A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth," it was to become a sacred book to a fair number of poets, and to enjoy a great vogue in the sixties, though more as a "magic" book than as a brilliantly argued synthesis of all Graves's most fundamental preoccupations: his reading in the classics, his conversations with Rivers, his immersion in both Celtic and classical myth and history, and his own firm sense of what was required of a dedicated poet.

Since the Bronze Age, the figure of an all-embracing female deity—a Moon Goddess, an Earth Mother, controlling seasons, fertility, and the cycle of birth and death—had been worshipped throughout Europe until challenged by the male gods of the Greco-Roman world. With Christianity, goddess worship disappeared, preserved, according to Graves, by poets alone as a divine secret—or through the worship of a muse. From his vast reading, Graves created a monomyth that gave order to his deepest convictions and restored to poetry some of the sanctity he felt it had lost by neglecting myth for reason.

Graves was a deicide; he had made from the great tangle of his existence a religion that he could feel true to, and which could resolve the contradictions and oppositions in his thinking. As a devotee, he was privy to the Goddess's will. He always bowed solemnly nine times at his first sight of the new moon. To the supplanting of the Goddess by a Father God he attributed all the ills of the modern world.

It is, of course, possible to read "The White Goddess" as pure wish fulfillment, as a projection into human history of precisely what Graves needed to believe in, ingeniously disguised as investigative scholarship, and which would justify the succession of young, beautiful muses whom Graves lit on in his later years. In it merged his fears and his ecstasies—his exacting mother, his war-horror, his trials with Laura, his sexual terrors and longings, the state of inspiration he equated with being in love, the coming together of dualities in a poem.

At the time, T. S. Eliot worked for Faber & Faber, and although he was somewhat overawed by the manuscript of "The White Goddess," he was certain of its importance and agreed to publish the book. The war ground to an end, and Graves began to raise his hopes of returning to Spain. He and Beryl now had three children, William, Lucia, and Juan; a fourth, Tomas, was born later, in Deyá. In 1946, Graves pulled strings and received permission to return. In the spring of 1946, a small plane landed them in Palma—Graves, Beryl, and the children. They found that Robert's house, Canelluñ, and its garden had been tended and maintained, books and papers in place. The villagers were delighted at the return of Don Roberto, as an omen of sorts. He had come back, to begin Deyá again.

THE LOST JEWEL

Who on your breast pillows his head now,
Jubilant to have won
The heart beneath on fire for him alone,

At dawn will hear you, plagued by nightmare,
Mumble and weep
About some blue jewel you were sworn to keep.

Wake, blink, laugh out in reassurance,
Yet your tears will say,
"It was not mine to lose or give away.

"For love it shone, never for the madness
Of a strange bed—
Light on my finger, fortune in my head."

Roused by your naked grief and beauty,
For lust he will burn:
"Turn to me, sweetheart! Why do you not turn?"

—ROBERT GRAVES
(December 25, 1954)

A MOUNTAIN chain runs along that coast of Majorca, and from its lower slopes the land falls away steeply to the Mediterranean. The coastline is broken by protruding rocky headlands, enclosing long, fertile valleys and small, secret beaches. Deyá comes as a surprise, perched halfway between mountain and sea. The upper part of the village is cone-shaped, with the houses on each other's shoulders, winding down from the church at the crest. Nothing is flat except for the terraces that descend like a series of steps from the base of the overhanging mountain, the Teix, which dominates and dwarfs the village, making it feel small. The terraces are planted with olive trees—puffs of silver-green—and with gnarled almond trees. At sunset, the great wall of the Teix goes through a constant shifting of color and shadow: light gold, ochre, amber, deep gray, dark. A short main street is lined with the village's essential outposts—butcher, baker, grocer, telegraphist, garage, café. The folds in the landscape form acoustical traps, so that miscellaneous sounds—the crack of an axe, a mule braying, conversation, the thud of a boat's motor, a girl somewhere singing—float in, breaking the mesmerizing silence. In the hot summer sun, the village seems suspended, half asleep. The land is so up-and-down that every window frames a different view, the air so clear that around the full moon the whole face of the Teix is drenched in bright silver, towering above the sleeping houses, the moonlight almost bright enough to read by.

Spain in the early fifties seemed to be still waking up, coming back to life, docile under Franco. Its frontiers had been sealed off from the rest of Europe since the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, in 1936, and had remained so throughout the Second World War. The country felt worn out, threadbare. Travelling was unpredictable, traffic sparse, food hardly plentiful. Agricultural communities like Deyá, however, had fared better through these lean years, for they could feed themselves, working the land by hand and mule. To local people, shuttered up for so long, foreigners were something of a novelty—a situation that in ten years changed beyond anyone's imagining. Deyá's population in the fifties must have been about five hundred. For the villagers, the foreigners' antics fulfilled the function that television does today.

One evening in the summer of 1953, I was sitting on the terrace of a small *pensión* in Deyá, watching the sunset play itself out on the face of the Teix. I had gone there, with quiet in mind, on the advice of a travel agent—I had no idea that Graves lived there. Suddenly, through the beaded fly-curtain, Robert erupted. He cut a formidable figure—tall, bearlike, with a large torso and head, a straw hat, a straw basket shouldered, and a look set on the edge of truculence. He sat himself down and started asking me a series of questions, as though mapping me. Then he reached for the book I was reading—Samuel Butler's "Notebooks." He crowed with pleasure and began looking for his favorite passages, telling Butler anecdotes with zest. Abruptly he got up, thanked me for the conversation, and left. After I came to know Robert well, I found that he often assessed people suddenly by some sign—a mannerism, a stray remark, a misplaced enthusiasm. I imagine that if I had been reading Ezra Pound's "Cantos" my memory of Graves might fill no more than this paragraph.

At the time, I was teaching at Sarah Lawrence, which left me long free summers. I had published some poems in *The New Yorker* and also a book of poems, slim in every respect, but I had begun to feel that writing and teaching went uneasily together; I had no idea how to live as a writer, though. What I wanted, emphatically, was to own my own time. It was this that drew me to Robert's existence—how he was able to live in the slow rhythms of Deyá and yet keep up a vigorous writing life. Robert was fifty-eight at the time, a veteran; I was twenty-seven, and an aspirant, no more. It was his lived example that led me to cut loose, to decide to live by writing.

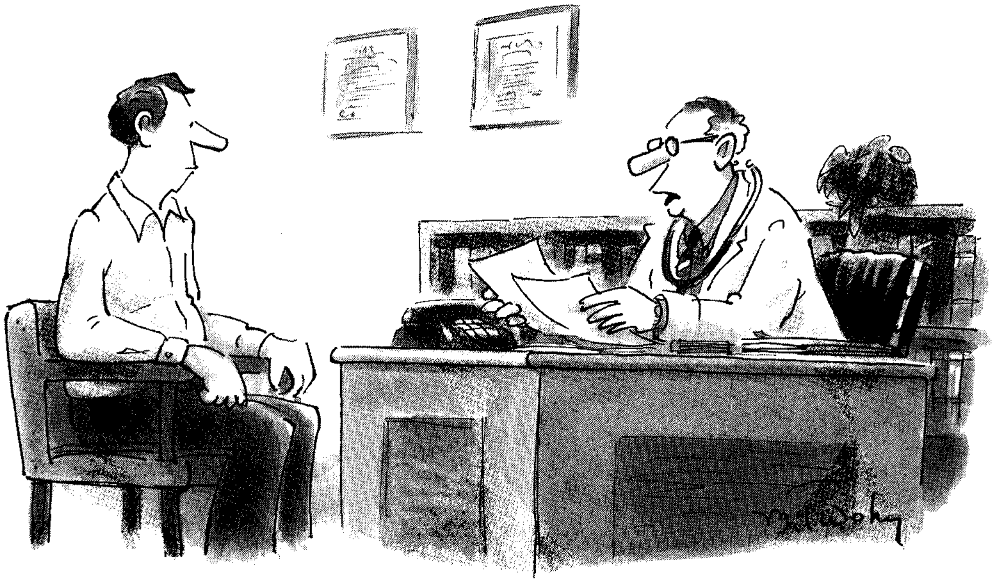
I ran into Robert at odd moments during that summer—at the beach, in the café for the mail delivery, in the village store—and each time he would launch straight into conversation: what he had been writing that day, how to cope with ants. One afternoon, he took me back with him to Canelluñ, his house beyond the village. There, sitting in his workroom, narrow, high-ceilinged, and walled with his essential books, we talked about poetry. At that time, I was immersed in poetry, and read it voraciously; I also knew a whole host of poems by heart. Robert's prodigious memory was even more crammed, and this meant that sometimes, on a walk, one of us would produce a poem from the air which we would then explore with a fine editorial point, questioning it, sometimes rewriting it, or even parodying it. It was a conversational mode we often returned to, as a kind of game.

A few foreigners lived in Deyá the year round—a sculptor, a clutch of painters, a writer or two—for houses were easily available and cheap to rent. It had regular visitors, who returned faithfully each summer, and a few families from Palma summered there with their children. Life was frugal, somewhat bare-boned—water drawn from the well, cooking done on charcoal, electricity supplied by a local turbine that came on at dark and ran until eleven-thirty, when it winked three times and, ten minutes later, candles lit, went out. So simplified, the days seemed slowed. Robert and I exchanged letters over the winter, I returned the following summer, and eventually I resigned from Sarah Lawrence and moved to Spain.

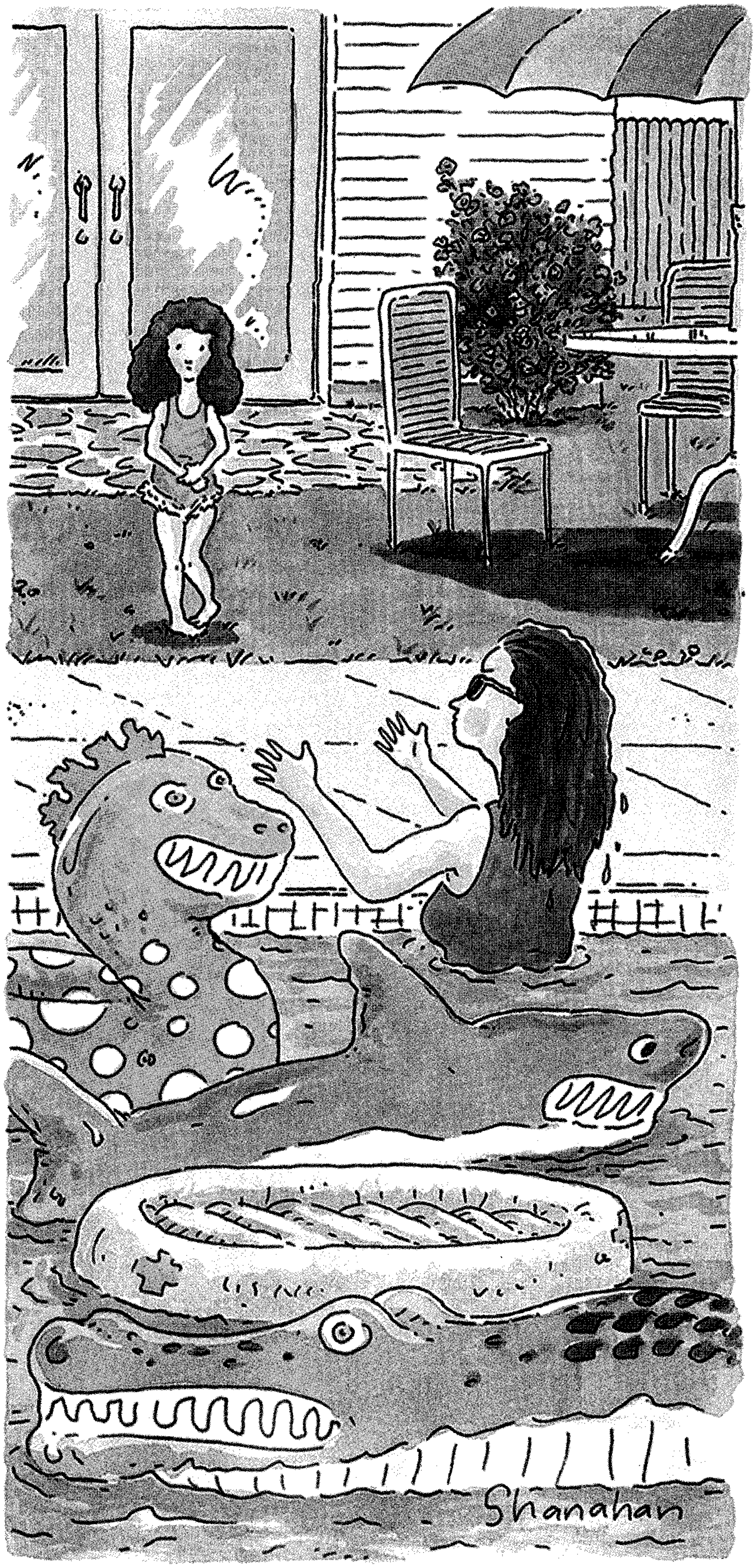
From 1953 on, I spent part of each year in Deyá, usually renting a different village house, whitewashed, sparsely furnished, stony, and cool. I came to know the Graves household very well. Its center of concern was always Robert, but Beryl, who knew his changes better than anyone else, kept him attached to daily realities—the garden's needs, who was coming when—and she had a way of bringing him back to earth with an oblique humor, which the children caught and copied: they would tease Robert by asking improbable questions, and he would answer in kind, teasing them back.

Robert's children knew his moods well. In quick succession, he could be stern and mischief-bent, angry and benevolent, greedy and fastidious, arrogant and gentle. He was also an inveterate maker of rules, and would blurt them out defiantly at table. He usually forgot them at once, as did his children. I always thought that it was Robert who first pronounced the rule that "poets shouldn't drive," for he said it to me often enough. When I reminded him of a poet he liked who had once driven a school bus for a living, he only smiled wryly.

Canelluñ sat in a considerable garden, which had to be watered morning and night, and secured against sheep that might stray in. The house looked out to sea, and from a wide hall it gave onto the living room and kitchen on one side and Robert's workroom on the other. I grew used to having him suddenly rise, unplug himself from the conversation, and cross the hall. He would sit at his worktable, dip a steel-nibbed pen into an inkwell, and go on from where he had left off, without forethought or hesitation. When he reached a stopping point, he might wander into the garden, taking his thinking with him; pass through the kitchen absent-mindedly; and return to the text. Quite soon, I realized that, apart from days of emergency or obligation, he wrote every day of his life, not on any strict schedule but whenever



"I'll want to run a few tests on you, just to cover my ass."



"Come on in, the water's fine."

a piece of time opened to him. When he wrote, he was detaching himself, composing himself, putting himself in order.

Graves kept away from machinery of any description; I never saw him touch a typewriter. In the thirties, he and Riding had come across a young German Jew whom they immediately took to. They taught him English, then offered him a job as secretary. He left Majorca with them, served in the Royal Navy in the Second World War, and afterward returned, with his family, to work again for Graves, living in a cottage by the entrance to the Canelluñ garden. His name was Karl Goldschmidt, but he had changed it in the Navy to Kenneth Gay. He had become, through many books, Graves's conscience: he was a meticulous copyreader. Where Robert's time was concerned, he acted as watchdog, suspicious of strangers. After a morning's work, Robert would leave his handwritten pages for Karl, and they would be on his desk, immaculately typed, by late afternoon. He would then subject the text to another severe mauling. Eventually, the finished manuscript would be given to Castor, the mailman, when he came to work in the Canelluñ garden. To Robert, the mails were sacred. His mail would be left for him in the village café, and he would appear religiously at the same hour, open his letters, and, very often, share their contents with any friend who was there. He was also a prodigious letter writer; it was nothing for him to fill his inkwell and write some thirty letters in a day—to friends, to editors, to critics, to newspapers. He wrote me once, "Find a place where things are done by hand, and the mails are trustworthy." It may have been as well that he antedated the fax machine.

DEYÁ often seemed to me like the stage of an enormous natural amphitheatre, demanding from its new settlers some sacrifice, some drastic behavior—and, indeed, many dramas took place among those who alighted there, in some of which Robert played a part, inevitably, for he considered Deyá *his* village. It is the setting of many of his poems; it served as his vocabulary—the landscape his thought moved in. He approached new arrivals with curiosity and diffidence. If he took to someone, he would often create, out of a few essential facts, a whole identity, holding it out to the newcomer as though it were a coat that had only to be slipped on to fit. Those who proved unwilling to have their essential selves thus reconstructed would have "let him down," and the coat would not be proffered again. These identities were fictions of his, fashioned to accommodate strangers into his orbit. In Deyá, he was an insistent Prospero.

During the fifties, the demands of school fees and other expenses kept Robert at his worktable. Late in 1954, he found that he had taken on more work than he could cope with, and he asked me if I would help him by doing a rough first translation of Suetonius' "The Twelve Caesars," for Penguin, while he himself translated Lucan's "Pharsalia." I went to work, and every so often Robert would appear, to talk and to check my progress. Ignoring the Latin, he would go over my latest pages, glasses cocked, pencil at the ready, humphing from time to time, leaving behind him an undergrowth of correction. I had done what I considered a finished version, so when he had gone I would pore over his corrections, for they were all improvements. Over that winter, I learned about writing English prose. The severity with which he corrected his own work he would apply equally to the writing of others—a habit that made him an impatient reader of his contemporaries. He became for me then the reader over my shoulder.

I also learned about the mysterious alchemy of translation. Robert was a first-rate classicist, and in the course of writing the two Claudius novels he had immersed himself in Roman history, but, much more than that, he would talk about life in Rome in the first century A.D. as easily as he would about life in, say, present-day London. In a sense, he had been there.

He decided that Suetonius was part gossip columnist, part obituarist, and had to be rendered in an appropriate English. Sometimes he took questionable liberties with an original text, as he did in his version of the Iliad. He could not always keep a rein on his impulse to improve and tidy up a text, even if it was not originally his. The one translation of his that he made into a true English masterpiece, however, is his version of Lucius Apuleius' "The Golden Ass." It was a text he deeply loved, and he so put on the original the spare clarity and cadence of his own prose that "The Golden Ass" more properly belongs among his own books—he made free with the text, for the sake of its English coherence. A good translator, he insisted, must have *nerve*. Nerve he had, in abundance. I had no idea then that I would turn to translation later in my life, but when I did I began to appreciate that brief apprenticeship, that gift of nerve.

DEYÁ remained quiet throughout the fifties, except for surges of summer visitors. Between books, Robert accepted invitations to write on a variety of subjects, and he took great pride in the swiftness and sureness with which he dispatched these tasks. Writing prose was a precise craft, he maintained, and a writer should be able to give matter of any kind the language it asked for. Robert also left his books behind him, quite literally. In 1956, he undertook to write a novel around the trial of Dr. William Palmer, a likable Victorian racegoer and rogue, on a charge of poisoning, for which he was hanged—unjustly, Graves thought. He brought from London all the books he would need as background to the period and set to work. It was as though William Palmer had come to stay in Canelluñ, in Robert's workroom, for Palmer usurped his conversation whenever he emerged. Robert worked on the book strenuously over a two-month period, and when it was finished, immaculately typed by Karl, the books were posted back to his London bookdealer, and William Palmer was never mentioned again.

Poetry, however, was an altogether different matter. Whenever he felt the nudge of a poem, he would put aside all else to make way for it. For him, poems were not just sudden pieces of writing: they were events. He subjected his poems to the same fierce scrutiny to which Laura had subjected them. He had a remarkable ear for the movement of a poem; even his lesser poems are beautifully fashioned. He went through many poetic manners, and was adept in all of them, but latterly he took to suppressing in each new edition of his "Collected Poems" his earlier, crankier poems, in favor of his later muse-poems. Muse-poems were either poems he felt had come to him magically, written from inspiration rather than intent, or poems addressed to a muse—love poems, but love poems that recast love conflicts in the language and manner of myth, and in which the lovers themselves act out mythical patterns.

Madness and fear of madness loom often in his poems, at the opposite pole from his sturdy common sense. Yet the poems he considered inspired rather than contrived came from the beauty and terror of madness, of the irrational; some of his images he claimed he fully understood only years after writing them. The onset of such madness was what he always feared and longed for: it moved between dream and nightmare, between desire and revulsion: and it came infallibly from falling in love. In writing, however, common sense often had the last word:

> For human nature, honest human nature
> Knows its own miracle: not to go mad.

At that point, into his sixties, Graves occupied a singular and increasingly admired ground among his contemporaries. He had redefined the obligations of the poet, which he sustained by a body of mythological connection, a whole cosmography, and a poetic creed that was coherent and rooted in the past. Few other poets had fulfilled the poet's function with such grave dedication or had cast it in such a visionary light. Only Yeats, whom Graves chose to despise, had sustained poetry with a mythology of his own devising, though one far less well informed and thorough than Graves's.

In workaday Deyá, I saw much of Robert, quite often with the children and Beryl, on Sunday picnics to the beach, and sometimes alone, in his workroom or at the café. I would question him about the past, about writers like Hardy, whom he had met, whom he could even imitate. He would try out on me the arguments in his current writing, inviting criticism and disagreement, which he usually resisted stoutly, sometimes crossly. He was tigerish over matters of language: his dictionaries were thumbed and ink-stained. He could be infuriating, in his pigheadedness, his often wild misjudgments. His utter disregard for privacy caused trouble between us more than once: he would broadcast matter from close conversations, sometimes recklessly. Robert and I were, however, used to each other. It was difficult to register disagreement with Robert; he was used to sweeping people along with him. With close friends, he would concede differences of opinion, although he clearly viewed them as temporary aberrations. I was often an aberrant friend. In those years, he was writing steadily, even jauntily, enjoying in Deyá a kind of equilibrium that seemed as if it might go on and on, like the agrarian round.

Every so often, word came his way that would give rise to what Beryl always referred to as "golden dreams." These stemmed from the time when Alexander Korda contracted to film "I, Claudius," in 1934, with Charles Laughton as Claudius. Bad luck dogged the film, and it was never finished; but Graves lived from then on in hope of another such windfall. What did come was an invitation in 1956 to lecture in the United States. Graves had waved off such offers before, but money was now an important consideration, and we held a summit meeting, Robert, Beryl, and I, to talk it over. I had an apartment in New York which he could use as a base, and I promised Beryl that I would travel with him. The arrangements were made, and he set to work preparing three lectures. I went to New York ahead of him, and met him at Idlewild. He arrived somewhat warily; but, startled by the crowds that attended his first lecture, by the discovery that he had unsuspected legions of readers, he expanded, and decided to enjoy himself. Dealing with publishers and editors by mail, Graves generally struck his boxer stance. Meeting them at dinners in his honor, however, he turned benign, and answered questions with his oblique, teasing humor. He visited the *New Yorker* offices and agreed to write stories as well as poems for the magazine. At the Poetry Center of the Y.M.H.A., he lectured on "The White Goddess"—by far the most lucid summation he ever made of that "mad book," as he used to refer to it. He looked the very icon of a poet: magnificent head, crowned with gray curls; stoutly in his own skin; in full command of his flights of argument. In the introduction to one lecture, he explained that on his last visit to America he had lost twenty pounds in weight and two thousand dollars, and that now, having regained the weight, he had come to make good his other loss. He teased his audiences with erudition; they went away spellbound, and bought his books. His visit made it clear to him that he need not worry about money, about the children's school fees: a number of his previous books were to appear in new editions; he had firm commitments for those in the works or in his sights; and there was enough talk of screenplays and movie rights to revive his "golden dreams." I had never seen Robert in front of an audience—it seemed to me that he thought only of readers, not of listeners—and was astonished, not just by his utter domination of his listeners but by his extraordinary lucidity. He sounded remarkably sane, but when he read his poems I realized that his mad self was merely lying in wait somewhere for him, and that he expected it and needed it.

Travelling, we replayed his lectures, sorting out the people he had met, paging through books he had been given, bountifully inscribed, and we continued to talk about poetry. Once, on the train from Boston to New Haven, he nudged me. About three rows away was a book face down on the arm of a seat, its owner asleep. It was "The Reader Over Your Shoulder." I had heard him tell, many times, a possibly apocryphal story about Arnold Bennett, who had carried in his wallet a five-pound note to give to the first person he found reading one of his books: on his death, the note was found, still folded, in his wallet. Graves waited until his reader awoke, and then he moved to an adjoining seat, introduced himself, told his Arnold Bennett story, signed the book, and gave his startled reader ten dollars, swearing he would claim it from his publisher.

We took long walks, in the Village, on the West Side piers. One night, he wanted to see the moon, which we found only after walking a few blocks; at that moment, Deyá

"I've decided to feed the dog soybeans."

was on his mind. Once, in the West Village, he stopped me and pointed: out of a sixth-floor window a horse's head was protruding. The building housed a police livery stable. One evening, returning home, he stopped, silent. After a while, he said, gruffly, “Don't much like that chap.” “That chap” was Robert himself, at his previous night's lecture. He flew back to Europe, Beryl's shopping list ticked and executed, on a Pan American plane that carried Toscanini's coffin in the back of the cabin. He wrote me a letter from the plane, which arrived in an envelope bearing the legend “Fly with the stars the Pan American way.” Robert had crossed out “stars” and written above it “dead.”

MY NAME AND I

The impartial Law enrolled a name
For my especial use;
My rights in it would rest the same
Whether I puffed it into fame
Or drowned it in abuse.

Robert was what my parents guessed
When first they peered at me,
And *Graves* an honorable bequest,
With Georgian silver and the rest,
From my male ancestry.

They taught me: “You are *Robert Graves*
(Which you must learn to spell),
But see that *Robert Graves* behaves,
Whether with honest men or knaves,
Exemplarily well.”

Then, though my I was always I,
Illegal and unknown,
With nothing to arrest it by—
As will be obvious when I die
And *Robert Graves* lives on—

I cannot well repudiate
This noun, this natal star,
This gentlemanly self, this mate
So kindly forced on me by fate,
Time, and the registrar;

And therefore hurry him ahead
As an ambassador
To fetch me home my beer and bread
Or commandeer the best green bed,
As he has done before.

Yet, understand, I am not he
Either in mind or limb;
My name will take less thought for me,
In worlds of men I cannot see,
Than ever I for him.

—Robert Graves
(January 6, 1951)

That first trip was something of a coming out for Robert. Where he had previously been reluctant to leave Deyá except for obligatory holidays in England, he now accepted invitations to travel, to give lectures and readings, to write magazine articles, to be featured in a *Playboy* interview. On his travels, he made new friends, some of them in movie circles; Alec Guinness and Ava Gardner both visited him in Deyá. Later, in the sixties, he became something of a cult figure: “The White Goddess” was a source book for readers of the Whole Earth Catalog. The BBC came to Deyá to make a television film about him. The State University of New York at Buffalo was preparing to pay him handsomely for the scratched manuscripts he had saved in the attic of Canelluñ. His mail had become voluminous.

As I think of it, that first foray made Robert suddenly aware that he had not only a literary reputation but a public self—he could enthrall an intelligent audience by his wit, the easy way he displayed his great learning, his humor, his downrightness, his poetic intensity, and, of course, the elegance of his language. Clusters of people, many of them young, waited after his lectures to ask him questions or murmur some fervent homage to him. He had more than enough money, and could count on a handsome advance for any new book. He met celebrities who wanted to meet him, and, talking with students, he breathed in some of the early fervor of the sixties. His letters, which were usually full of the family, the garden, and the work in hand, now talked of famous visitors, movie options. His royalties could now make Canelluñ more comfortable, and buy Beryl a new Land Rover. Yet, on that first visit, he had been perfectly conscious that he was playing himself, reinforcing his eccentric image. I think that as he began to travel more he steadily lost that consciousness. Never exactly modest, he became increasingly arrogant, increasingly defiant in his views. The golden dreams, he was certain now, were real.

Change was coming precipitously to Spain at the same time, even to villages as far-flung as Deyá. Mass tourism changed the face of Spain, and was to sustain the Spanish economy into the eighties. Bottled gas replaced charcoal in the kitchen, cars and buses began to multiply on the roads, foreign newspapers appeared in the kiosks. The equilibrium that the village—and Robert—had enjoyed throughout the fifties was suddenly over forever.

In late 1958, I left Deyá, first to sail the Atlantic with some friends in a Nova Scotia schooner, then to remarry and settle in Madrid. I saw much less of Robert after that, but we still exchanged letters. Since I first came across Spain, I had become immersed in it, quite apart from Robert, for Robert's interest in Spain was distant; only his locality, Deyá, concerned him. I learned Spanish through those years, and I travelled all over Spain, looking and listening and reading. In 1960, *The New Yorker* published the first of a series of chronicles I wrote from Spain—anti-Franco, as were all but a few of the Spaniards I knew. Robert scolded me for writing it: it was impolite, he maintained, to criticize one's host. I found this attitude ridiculous, and said so. We stopped short of a serious falling out, but I came to realize that, inevitably, I was withdrawing from Robert's orbit.

Robert had always been ready to laugh at himself; now I felt he was losing his irony. He had grown deeply serious about the Goddess, and, more and more, he laid down her law. I had always viewed the Goddess as a vast, embracing metaphor, and I thought Robert did, too, somewhere in his mind. I never believed in the Goddess, any more than I believed in a Christian God. I realized, however, that Robert did believe, insistently so, and that the belief sustained and justified him.

In late 1959, Robert underwent a prostate operation, in London, which had serious complications. He was found to have a rare blood condition and had to be given massive transfusions, which left him weak for months. To a number of people, his son William included, that trauma had much to do with increasingly irrational behavior on his part throughout the sixties. The allowances his friends made for him were exceeded by his growing insistence that he was somehow a spokesman for his times, that his long-held views were becoming generally accepted as the truth. It seemed to me when I met him later that year that he was losing all sense of the "otherness" of other people: now they had only to fit into his script.

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Gray haunted eyes, absent-mindedly glaring
From wide, uneven orbits; one brow drooping
Somewhat over the eye
Because of a missile fragment still inhering,
Skin-deep, as a foolish record of old-world fighting.

Crookedly broken nose (low tackling caused it);
Cheeks, furrowed; coarse gray hair, flying phrenetic;
Forehead, wrinkled and high;
Jowls, prominent; ears, large; jaw, pugilistic;
Teeth, few; lips, full and ruddy; mouth, ascetic.

I pause with razor poised, scowling derision
At the mirrored man whose beard needs my attention,
And once more ask him why
He still stands ready, with a boy's presumption,
To court the queen in her high silk pavilion.

—ROBERT GRAVES
(January 12, 1957)

IN "The White Goddess," addressing the question of why so few poets continued to write throughout their life, Graves explains:

> The reason is that something dies in the poet. Perhaps he has compromised his poetic integrity by valuing some range of experience or other—literary, religious, philosophical, dramatic, political or social—above the poetic. But perhaps also he has lost his sense of the White Goddess: the woman he took to be a Muse, or who was a Muse, turns into a domestic woman and would have him turn similarly into a domesticated man. Loyalty prevents him from parting company with her, especially if she is the mother of his children and is proud to be reckoned a good housewife; and as the Muse fades out, so does the poet. . . . The White Goddess is anti-domestic; she is the perpetual "other woman," and her part is difficult indeed for a woman of sensibility to play for more than a few years, because the temptation to commit suicide in simple domesticity lurks in every maenad's and muse's heart.

In 1961, he began a poem, "Ruby and Amethyst," thus:

> Two women: one as good as bread,
> Bound to a sturdy husband.
> Two women: one as rare as myrrh,
> Bound only to herself.

In July of 1960, I went to visit him in Deyá briefly, for his birthday, with my wife and son. Robert as a baby had been touched on the head by Swinburne while being wheeled in his pram on Wimbledon Common; I had Robert touch Jasper on the head, for continuity's sake. Robert was newly consumed by a letter from the agent William Morris, who had suggested that "The White Goddess" might make a singular film, and he had been asked to provide an outline, for which he had made notes. Would I take them and see what I could make of them? The notes were indeed fertile, even daring in places. Then he wrote me, once I was back in Madrid, that he had found the person who must play the White Goddess. He had also found a new muse.

She was Canadian by nationality, with a Greek father and an Irish mother, and she was called Margot Callas. Graves met her in Deyá during that summer of 1960, and was instantly entranced by her. She was intelligent, witty, highly intuitive, certainly beautiful, and it was not long before Robert was discovering a clutch of other qualities in her. It was not long, either, before new poems began to flow from him, and Margot occupied his whole mind. Once more, the Goddess had sent him a sign.

Not for the first time, or the last, Graves was captivated by what he pronounced firmly to be a manifestation of the Goddess. On each occasion, he became possessed, partly mad; on each occasion, he wrote, furiously, poems, only poems. He would shower his muse with them, and with letters and tokens of faith. Beryl, who knew him best, accepted these muses with a calm that others found inexplicable: she had learned how necessary they were to him. As in his years with Laura, he would refuse to hear a word against his muse. Now, as high priest, as voice, he spoke for the Goddess: only he could interpret her wishes, her commands.

Toward the end of 1960, I had to go to New York briefly, and I went by way of London, where the Graves family had gone for a Christmas visit. Robert spoke only of Margot, obsessively, and gave me some letters and tokens to take to her in New York. I did not know then what that would mean.

I remember that snow was lying in the city when I arrived, and that I went first thing to *The New Yorker*, to turn in a piece. I spent ten days busily, made plans to sail back to Spain on the Leonardo da Vinci, and delivered Robert's tokens to Margot. She, too, was returning to Spain, and took a cabin on the same ship.

Inevitably, we talked during the voyage about Robert. She, too, was taken aback by the insistence in his redefinition of her. She had been given no say in the matter; in Robert's eyes, her muse status required only her acquiescence, and her nature was anything but acquiescent. We talked of many things besides Robert, and during the voyage realities intervened: Margot and I fell precipitously in love. By the time we reached Spain, we were lost in each other, and had decided to leave behind our present lives. She made her way to Majorca, I to Madrid. A month later, we met up in France, and came to rest in a water mill in the French Basque country. Robert was not on my mind.

I had not thought what his reaction might be, but I could not have imagined its ferocity. Margot came in for no criticism: the Goddess had swung her axe, as predicted. I came in for all his rage. She was no longer muse, I no longer poet. The poems that followed our desertion claimed the next section of the "Collected Poems." It was not until later that I saw this as a pattern that had arisen several times before. In the mythic pattern of "The White Goddess" the poet succumbs to the rival as the inevitable death-in-love that he must undergo; in reality, however, the rival became the arch-betrayer. Robert, in those slowly declining years, came to see his reality wholly in terms of mythic inevitability; and the myth was his alone.

We never spoke again, Robert and I. Over the years, Margot and I had many meetings and partings. I would hear of Robert occasionally, for I still saw friends we had in common. New settlers had flocked to Deyá, and land was being snapped up, houses were being built. It had grown too busy to be any longer Robert's village. The Goddess proved ever more insistent: a new muse had manifested herself, and Robert was once more writing poems—muse-poems.

When his "Complete Poems" are published, I think they will reveal that in his strongest poems Robert is less a love poet than a poet of opposition and contradiction, of two-mindedness, much more questioner than worshipper. His muse-poems, finely wrought and tense as they are, all follow the same single-minded plot. Some read like imitations of him—perhaps because the muses he chose latterly were more and more his own creations. The stance he struck became ever more adamant, even shrill. I think he had stopped listening—to those close to him, to his own commonsense self, even to his own misgivings.

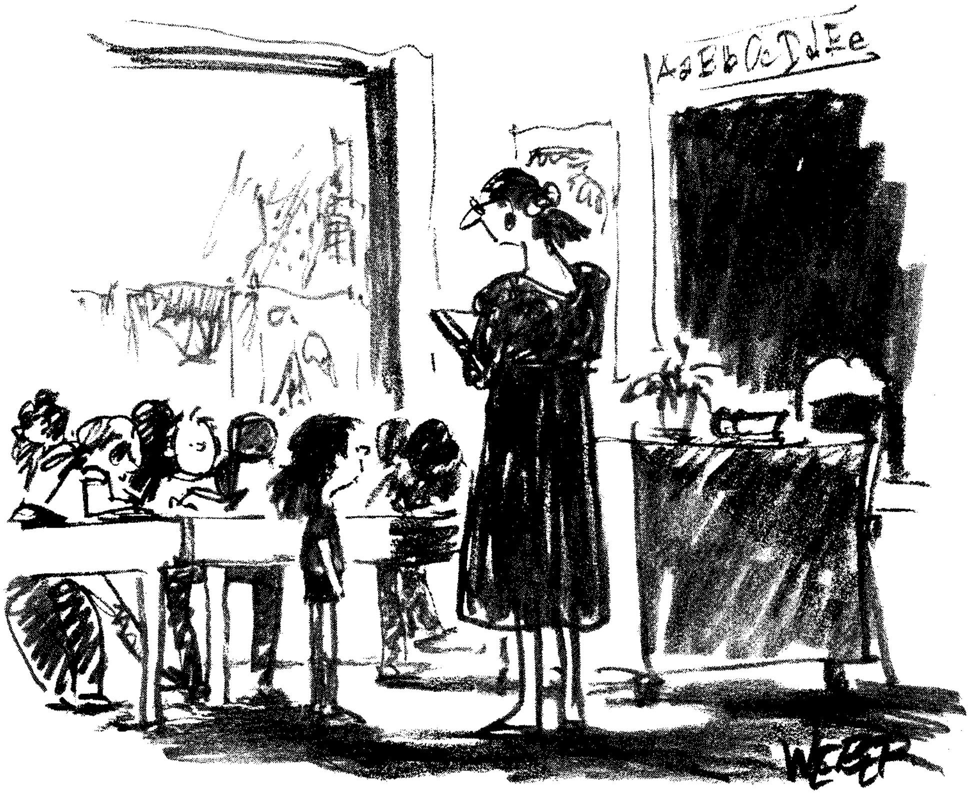
Of the thousand-odd poems that Robert wrote, I can think of eleven that are sufficiently strong and singular as to belong unquestionably to the canon of English poetry. That may seem meagre; but what most distinguishes him as a poet, I think, is how he chose to live, his dedication to the office of poet. In the first chapter of "The White Goddess," he wrote:

> Since the age of fifteen poetry has been my ruling passion and I have never intentionally undertaken any task or formed any relationship that seemed inconsistent with poetic principles; which has sometimes won me the reputation of an eccentric.

That remained his measure, all his long life.

Robert's vindictiveness toward me did not reach me except by rumor, and there I was hurt mostly by its untruths. I felt for Beryl, but she was wisest in Robert's ways, and, giving him the room he needed, she allowed him his follies, whether wishful or actual. I had my own work to do, and I continued to do it, just as Robert would have. I realized then, as I do now, that many of my writing habits I absorbed from him, like the sanctity of the writing table, which I set up wherever I am. I remain attached to village life and to the agricultural round. When Margot and I first parted, I bought a small house on the edge of a Spanish mountain village, and spent every summer there with my son Jasper. For the last ten years, I have gone every winter to the Dominican Republic, where I have a house above the sea, and where, boned to essentials, the days simplify and slow down, as they did in Deyá. I revise what I write, scrupulously. I still bow nine times to the new moon; and I still read his poems, or listen to them in my head.

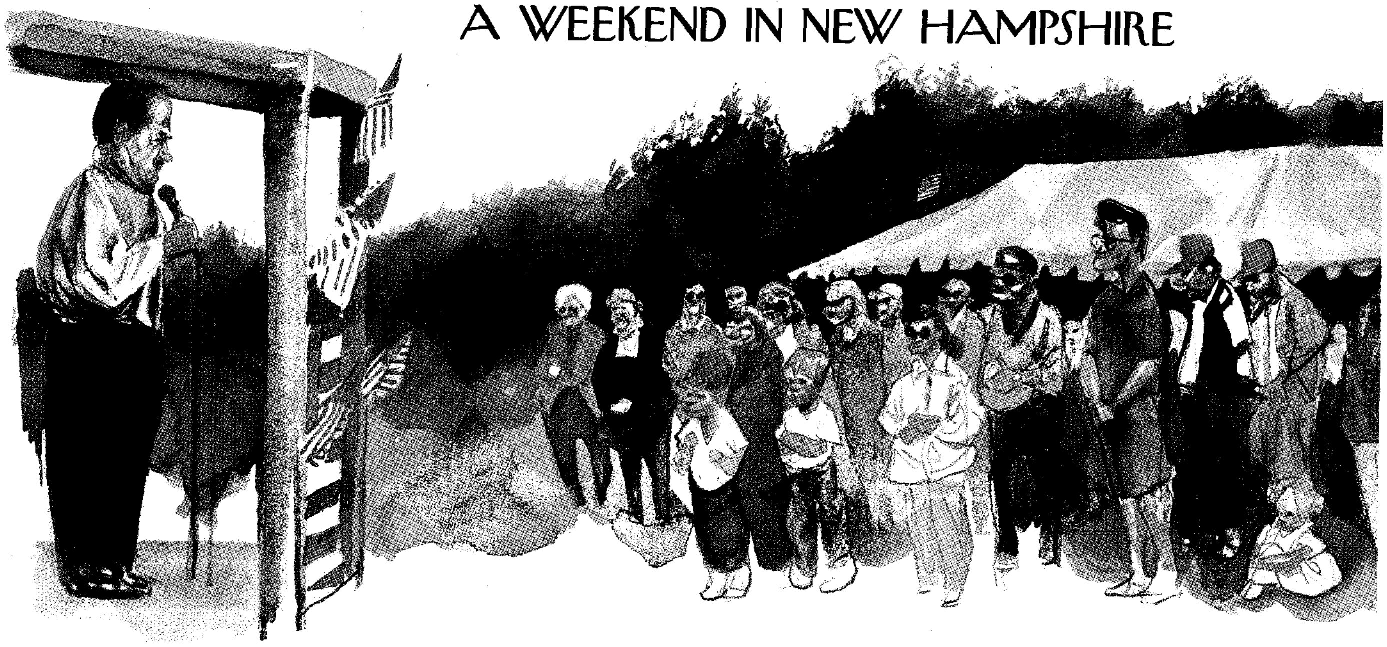
In the spring of 1985, I made a brief visit to Spain, with Margot, to visit Deyá, to see Beryl and some of the children, and to take farewell of Robert. His mind and memory had been failing steadily, and now he lay on a cot in the room adjoining his workroom, dozing, silent, beyond communication. It was as though he had gone into one of his trances and had not returned from it. At one moment, however, his eyes opened and widened; and it seemed to me that in them still lay all the wisdom and mischief in the world. ♦


Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee
WEBER

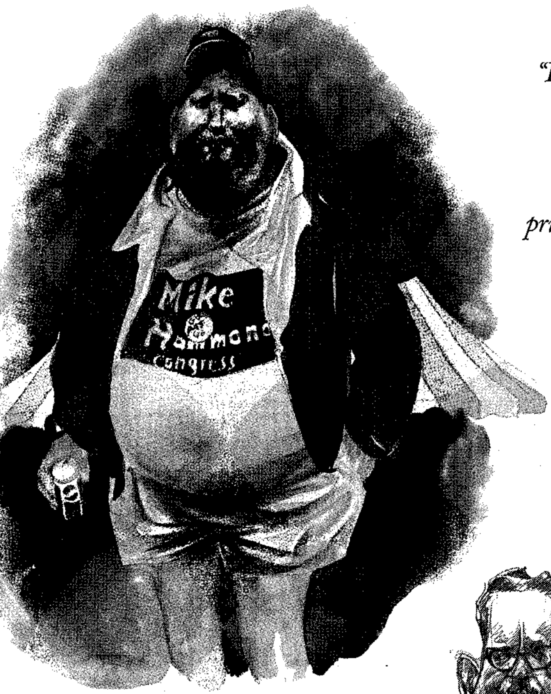
"I'm sorry, Ms. Greer, but I can't function under this kind of scrutiny."

SKETCHBOOK · BY STEVE BRODNER

A WEEKEND IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

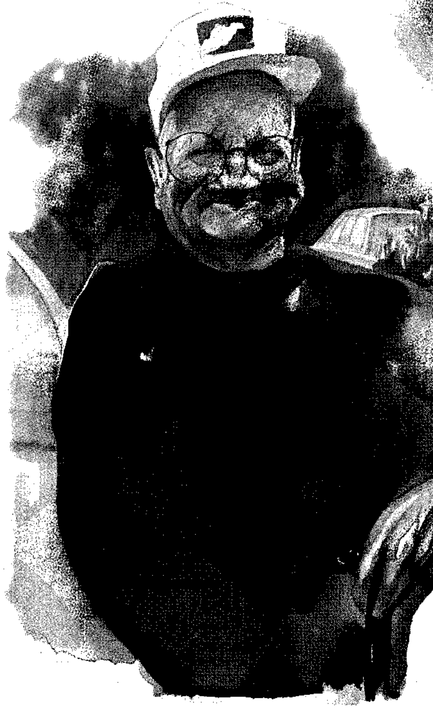


"We came out early and worked our groups: the pro-lifers, the former Perot people, the tax groups, the gun owners, education people, t

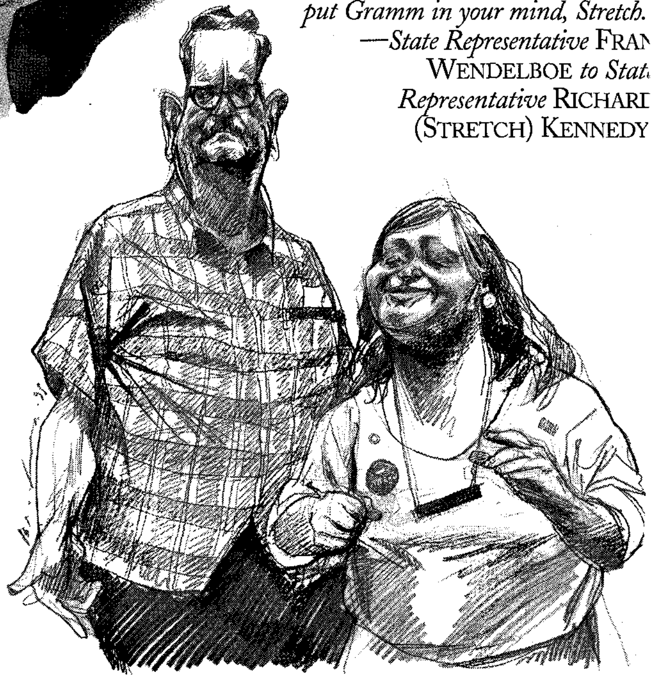


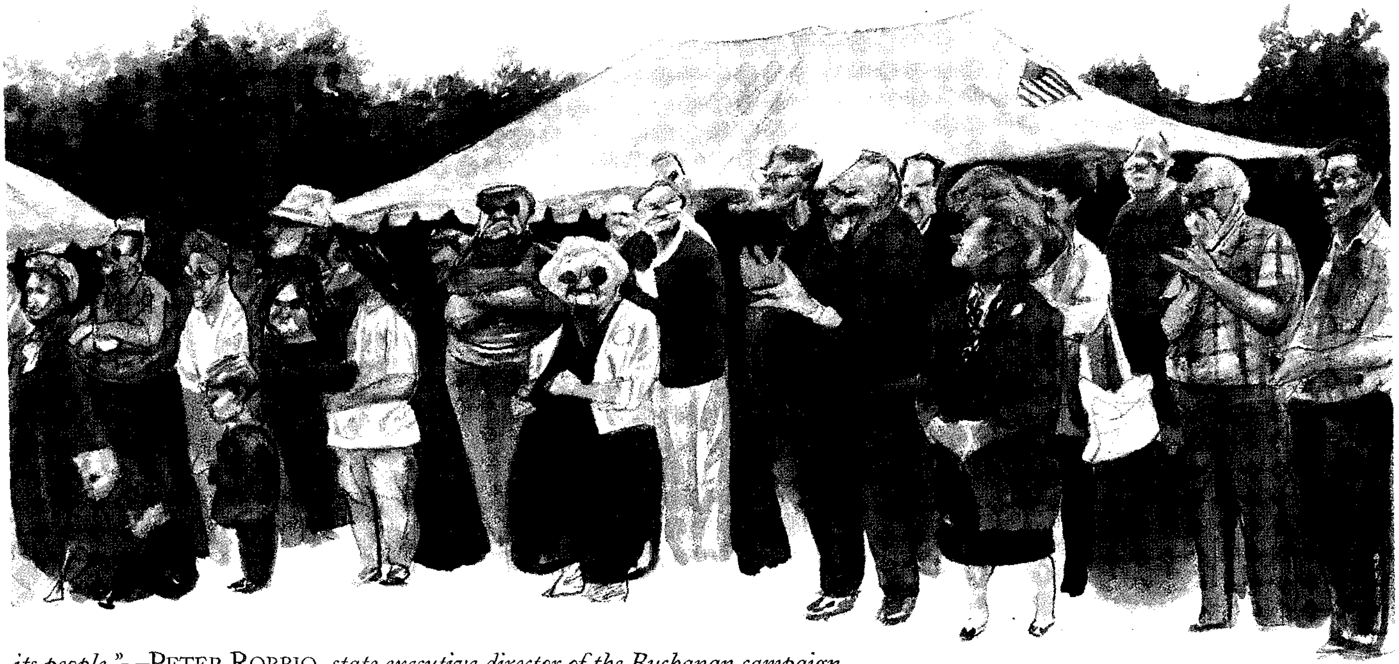
"I think Buchanan's done better than most people expect. And Gramm has really had some problems up here. Especially anything monkeying with the primary. He came up and talked about how his best friend was money. And that turns off the Yankee up here."—CHRIS WOOD, *Concord, New Hampshire.*

"He looks honest. Some kind of person that I'd pick out to be honest. And he acts like a common person to me. Like my friend Joe—honest, decent. I want decent people again."—NORMAN PARKER, *Farmington, New Hampshire.*

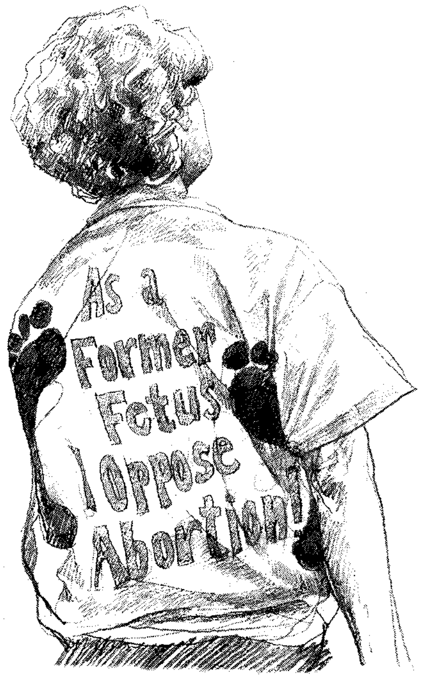


"Keep Buchanan in your heart, bu put Gramm in your mind, Stretch.
—State Representative FRAN
WENDELBOE *to Stat*
Representative RICHARD
(STRETCH) KENNEDY

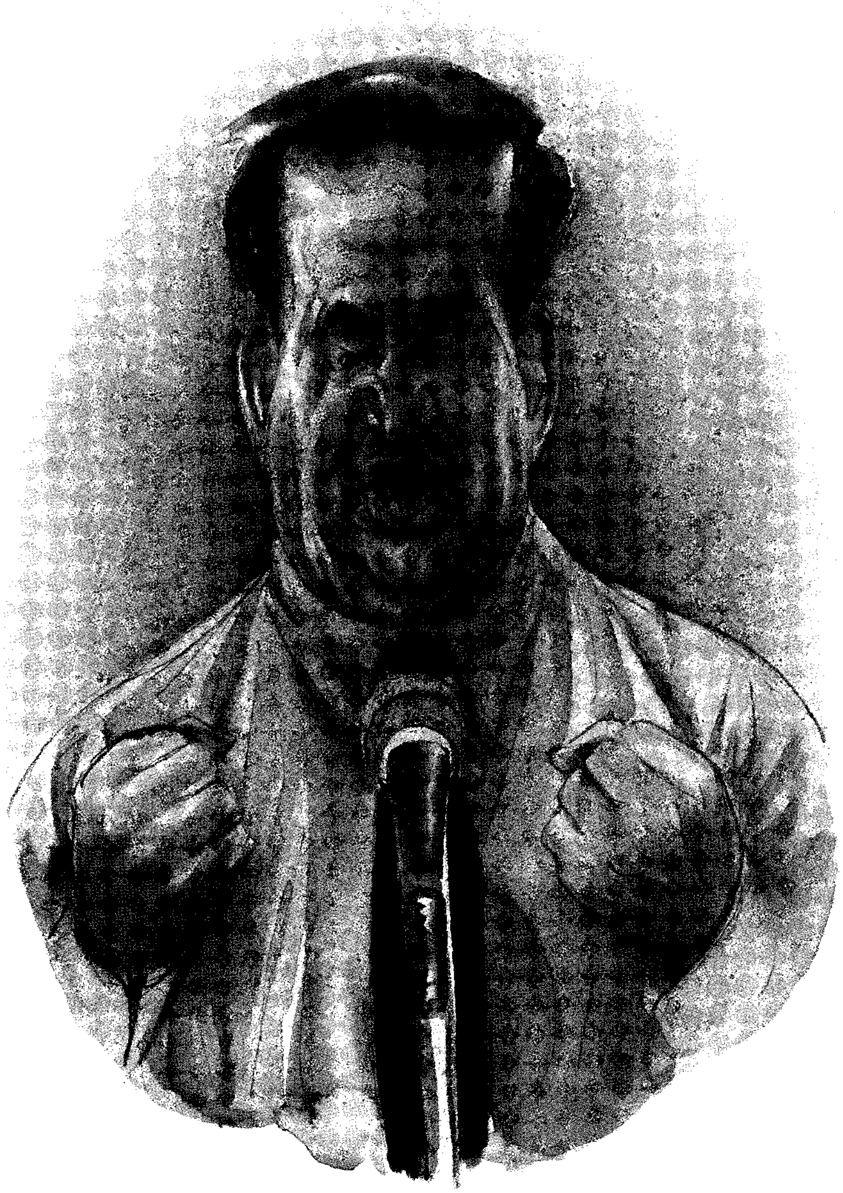




its people."—PETER ROBBIO, *state executive director of the Buchanan campaign.*



As a Former Fetus I Oppose Abortion!

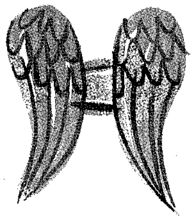


"Last week, I read that the World Bank gave a two-hundred-and-sixty-five-million-dollar loan to Vietnam." (Audience boos.) "That loan is guaranteed by the mothers and fathers and sons and daughters of the fifty-eight thousand who died there. . . . Let me tell you something—it has gone too far. Communist China last year got three billion dollars. This is the new world order, my friends. Let me tell you something. Let me tell you something. When I raise my hand to take the oath of office, that new world order comes crashing down."
—PATRICK BUCHANAN, *speaking at the Granite State Taxpayers' picnic and straw poll.*

FICTION

TOWARD A MORE PRECISE IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEWER ANGELS

BY ALLAN GURGANUS



HAVING died, having been judged unexpectedly worthy, you—new recruit—find yourself transposed up the infinite octaves that now separate you, the truly righteous, from the rest of those deadbeats left down below.

Glad you're aboard.

You are saved from the ranks of the glum and greedy. You are set apart from a recent Attorney General whose one defense ran that he hadn't been indicted—yet. How does it feel to be finally unlatched from pain? I am here to welcome you.

I have greeted many.

(Some complain that I "editorialize" during these wake-up calls. But, for me, you see, strong opinion *is* paradise. I've been here for absolutely ever. My exact age, thank God, is finally irrelevant. I can't believe how much I once cared. Time was *such* a drag. My dears, we are well rid of it.)

And what do you thousands of souls have in common? A fondness for the lucky numbers one, three, and seven. For the color red. An interest in astrology: you will find more Geminis and Scorpios among you than any other sign (yes, we, too, notice these things, but don't quite believe them, either).

As a group, you exhibit a sense of humor often dismissed as "infantile." You have a secret sweet tooth and a passion for collecting everything from salt-cellars to orphans. There's a talent for empathy, and a quiet, if profound, interest in sex (more about that later). You've each kept a garden, if only a window box. Your virtues run alongside a scofflaw's hatred for paying parking tickets.

Among your group, you will not find a single representative of the executive or legislative branches, although a handful from the judiciary did squeak through. As usual, few of the professionally religious made our last cut. There is some fairness after all.

And today there's another element, surprise: you are astonished at the fact of Paradise—*any* paradise; you are shocked at being picked for it. But, see, that's what *con*stitutes your righteousness, you silly willies!

The fact is, thirty-nine per cent of you are atheists. Were . . . atheists.

Not one of you did the weekly Meals-on-Wheels gig for a superstitious prospect of heavenly reward. Such climbers and overachievers are not, alas, for us. Nor, thank goodness, are glad-handers from the business community of Atlanta. Although we have included two "career" Manhattanites, we have no Parisians. Our ranks . . . are . . .

Uh-um, excuse me. I see you three whispering, on the two hundred and ninety-fifth row back. Yes, you. Look, I know you're keyed up, and I don't doubt that you have scads to chat about. But I ain't exactly your average flight attendant up here delivering the same old crash lore, my dears.

There'll be time for your little personal exchanges. Thank you. (I swear, in every group, we get a few.) Where was I? Oh yes, Paradise, etc. Our ranks are comprised solely of seeming nonbelievers who somehow found ways to live believingly. The top crowd is never quite what you expect.

YES, there is a Hell. But why bother your pretty little heads about that? Except, of course, in this one respect: you'll find it delicious picturing the pain now being endured by the lowlifes you left behind—the ones who divorced you, or borrowed money they never intended repaying, or, in forty-nine of the cases present, actually killed you! They're now suffering. Hell is their constant root canal. A molar-grinding torture will keep them screaming through eternity. (Never doubt that God loves you.)

Each year, we find our entering class gets smaller. But what ascends to us is still deeply edifying. You constitute the center of the moral universe that still holds. And lately, little has. Attendant rewards await you.

Let's call this Freshman Orientation, shall we? It is my joy to describe certain facts of your sudden, exquisite setup.

WE begin with your new shapes. I see a few in back noticing. No criticism implied: you are altered. Actually "transformed" (to do the miracle full credit).

Your wings—don't fret—won't be a burden. Clear of your sight lines, they're useful should you ever need them, like overabundant closet space.

All our torsos are single-sex units—chests, sizable for pecs, if small for breasts. Your silver ectoplasmic wings are tucked behind. I note your expression, eighty-ninth from the left a hundred and forty rows back. Like you, I found the concept of wingedness a little retro when I arrived. This far into time's vertical future, "wing-shapes" are scarcely a flight requirement. In fact, such canaryish trappings seemed coy, vestigial. But nobody asked me.

You see, I'm allowed to dissent. Crabbiness has always offered me a pleasure supernatural. So, God—having slipped up and made *me* an angel—tolerates my crossness: it will grumble on forever. God's really rather good at this.

It's hard to trust this dazzling arrangement, isn't it, my dears? Here, let me help you try.

If, in your last life, you ever envi-

ANDERS WENNGREN

sioned wanting to do something, you can fully do it here. Not "do," but "have done." For, to picture a deed in Paradise is both to enact it and to recall it instantly. That is a paradox of God—He/She has never been an entity dwelling in the present tense. God is perfect memory, plus endless time. Anything that was ever forgotten (that is, everything) eventually ends up here, in our ecstatic Lost-and-Found.

Example? I might say, oh, homemade lemon-meringue pie, cooling on a Kansas windowsill before its browned peaks harden into stickiness. A confection made twenty minutes back by your mom, who'll be dead (drunk driver, laundry truck) before suppertime—her final creation and gift, steam rising, set on a tea towel, your back yard's blooming fruit trees in view. You wander home from school. Mom's car is gone, but her pie is waiting. It smells of grated lemon rind and is held in place by the lightest possible crust. You, aged nine, ache to sneak a wedge. In life, you did not. The wreck happened. You heard it from the house. Aunts converged. Casseroles arrived. The pie was refrigerated and then—as newer treats swarmed in—was "tossed," uneaten. But now, in Paradise, you get to taste both it and her. There, I hear those new lips smacking.

Oh, I love the sound of your laughter. I spent much of my earthly energy loving others. And do you know what they did? They all left me. Coming in through the back door, I dreaded seeing the note on the table again, "You were kind, and I am not sure why but I know I'm gone for good." Our dresser drawers half-emptied, our bundled savings fully cleared.

But this time, for all time, it's always hello. Hello, forever. Thank you, gracious God. Such pleasure. I've been volunteering for this duty since, well, you've no idea.

THAT roar you'll hear intermittently forever is called "euphoria." You'll learn to tamp it back should it interfere with the Conversation. Nothing must ever obscure one glorious word of that, our communal enterprise. You have just arrived midsentence at the longest dormitory bull session ever.

Heavenly talk is not symphonic—symphonies were nothing more than poignant human overreaching. It is chamber music, chat and revelation, a gossip where history, picnic sensations, philosophy, mathematical verity, and all deeds sexual are conjoined to form a single, round-the-clock state, a forward beating, rolling motion we call "joy."

"Hell is other people," wrote one sad man. But, you see, if Hell is other people, so is Heaven. Heaven is just *other* other people.

Imagine speaking steadily, commingling your wings, merging your new skin with, say, Plato. Leonardo, Bach, Mozart, Jane Austen, Rembrandt—who'd still rather draw, which he does with a finger in the air. You can relax with George Eliot, Chekhov, Virginia Woolf, Montaigne, and one of the Wright Brothers (I can never remember which one, but he's definitely on my side of the wing debate).

When things get slow, Buster Keaton does one of his "falls"—going straight down through clouds. You'll love it. George Washington? He's always around, a lovely man, I guess, but has nothing to say. Jefferson? In Hell. Go figure.

We have Shakespeare (a sexual athlete and an absolute stitch). Shakespeare and Lincoln are inseparable lately, thick as thieves; Shakespeare thinks that he invented Lincoln, and Lincoln—whose sense of humor is dark as corn syrup—lets Shakespeare think that. Typical.

TIPS on things to try first? You now have access to all languages and patois, all the facts and contradictions of intergalactic history. Your mind can go anywhere, can become anyone's in any language, in any period.

Eating, sleeping, and the nuisance of elimination are optional. But many of our ranks still choose to exercise these functions in memory (and therefore deed). Old habits die hard. Habits seem less willing to stop living than does human life itself! In fact, "Voiding" is even catching on in certain circles—you see them seated, knee to knee, backsides exposed. Quaint, loggy, primitive, hopeless, soporific yet engaging as human life itself. I consider such fads endearing.

Sex? You think we're superior to that on high? With all this time on our hands? Rethink, my new beauties. You'll find no virgins in Paradise—at least, not for long. (Oh, sure, there are a few holdouts. Emily Dickinson, Winslow Homer, Joseph Cornell, and Vincent van Gogh. And, I mean, everybody's after them.)

On this plane, you need only consider the act with someone, and instantly—indeed, almost involuntarily—you two are *at* it. Oftentimes in midair. Others, materialized nearby, get to watch. All in the family. No need for your partner to announce his or her name or former occupation or death date—you know all that already. (You know everything, my dear ones. And instead of being phone-book boring, omniscience—one now realizes—is *such* a turn-on.)

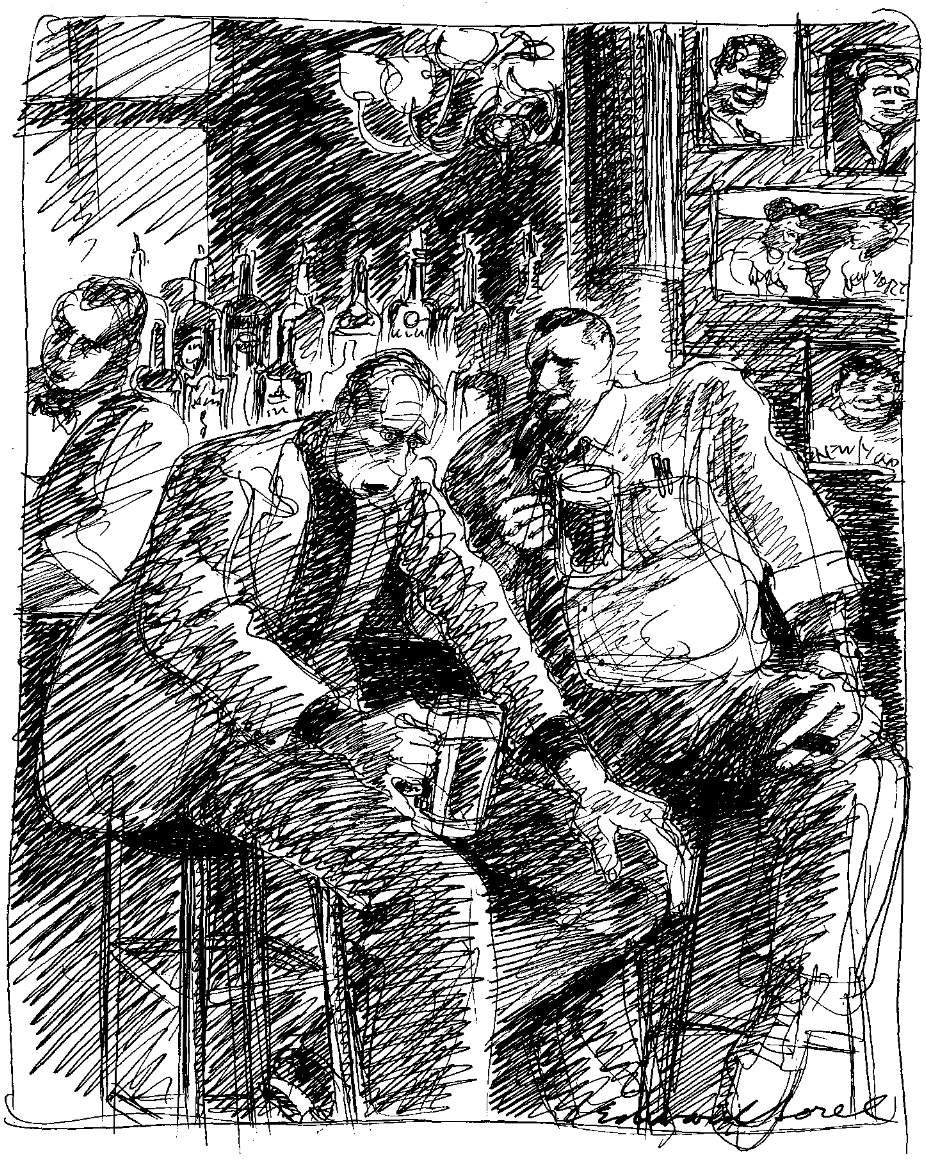
Joined to your latest beloved, you both instantly know each other's deepest trigger spots: every encoded prelingual animal oink is spread out before you like a piano keyboard. "Higher," "There," "Unnnnh," "Wetter," "Less teethies," etc. Imagine the sensations of "simultaneous orgasm" stretched out in ejaculatory increments across pearly eternity—entire. The screaming can be hilarious.

All exchanges here, by the way—ideological, fluid, or electric—produce emotions of operatic intensity. Just as smart mortals perfect their chess, we brighter angels play at an unscience called "human emotion." The rules of human emotion are exceedingly complex because: there are none.

SOME of you are wondering if you "deserve" such epic rewards. If you're "up to" Heaven. You never thought of yourself as particularly *good*, right? Actually, you often weren't. It's how you compare to those *other* slugs that makes you seem total saints.

The others said, "Who'll know? What difference will it make in fifty years? As long as you've already taken off your knickers, tramp, why not this once?" Meanwhile, you were down there, muddling through, sweating out your quarterly estimates, still playing by the rules, sweet fools.

Alive, I myself did most everything wrong. I even did *wrong* wrong. I can't



"The irony is, I'm that rare individual who really could have handled success."

• •

say more. I had a sort of life, I guess. I overtrusted. "No good deed goes unpunished" seemed my epitaph till waking in Paradise. (Nobody dead was ever more floored by it than I.)

By the bye, little is demanded here. Some of our denizens opted for a good nap on arriving in 1491 and have chosen never to end that supernal siesta. So be it. And maybe it's just me, but that far row on the end? Looks a teensy bit ragged, almost unattractive. Thank you, there, I'm feeling better, and you're kind.

WHAT have we retained from that depressed old world? What do schnauzer-gnawed postmen, unpredictably big-hearted Monte Carlo gamblers, and the twin Kiwanian brothers who broke records selling Christmas trees for cerebral palsy in subzero weather, only to catch pneumonia for thanks, all have in common? Yes, I see that you in back are catching my drift. Good: explore, feel.

Yes, your original genitals. Those, and your hands.

The dear baubles (be they cleft or sceptered), plus your clever mitts, are surely still themselves, no? Open and close your hands. Look between your legs. "Hello," right? Now, don't you feel a heap less alone, finding they've tagged along, petlike?

Go ahead, check yours out. Flex those digits. Our many nail-biters will find their nails still nibbled. Your wedding rings? They vaporized in transit, alas. But the grooves still dent and dignify. Laden with typing skills, able to tie fly-fishing lures in the dark, still so attuned to others' genital pleasures—your hands were more particularly clever than your head. Manual labor matters mucho to our Lord. Also, being fairly good at it, your hands contain your own most automatic kindness: your soul. Touch your underparts for starters? I know I never tire of doing so. Oh, the memories stirred!

Your surviving genital portions are now made of finer stuff than that first rude stab. Here they're more satiny, slightly sleeker, euphemized. Plus there's a bonus: the distance you just blurred through in getting here mercifully served your lower body as a depilatory. That helps, design-wise. It was patchy, pubic hair, admit it. Even *ours*.

AND finally, my dears, this is how God separates the two classes of we, the angelic. You are all now Angels Republican Second Rank (that's just "for showing up"). But way, way higher stand the Angels Imperial First Class.

Though I belong to that imperial crowd, I was not consulted in the matter. Paradise should not, I feel, make such élitist distinctions, I'm sorry.

How will you become Angels Imperial First Class as, unexpectedly, yours truly did? Simple.

If, while wandering among the other angels, you, new kid, should pass a veteran who, glancing at your telltale lower regions, knows you (in all senses) and can name your name, then you will instantly be marked as a soul judged as ultimately good.

It proves you did the maximum in exercising your God-given vertical identity while still painfully earthlocked.

Your discoverer-namer might be your predeceased spouse or lover. Perhaps an over-adoring elder brother or sister. Maybe a diddling scoutmaster with a great memory for detail, up close and personal. Or just some regular customer whose hand you shook every week for sixty years.

But, if any such angel can, by recognizing some twist or suppleness of your mortal generative area—a characteristic moundness or a roundness, or a clove-shaped mole; a depth or a breadth; a raggedness, a rosiness, a heft or a tininess; if any (Are they ready to come in? Fine, hold them just a wingbeat more, please. . . .), among the millions of formerly dead about to file past you (quite a spectacle of breeze and beauty), should suddenly point down with glee, and utter that single word—your name! ("Verne!" say, or "Sally!")—then you, my dearest, will be admitted to the Angels Imperial First Class forever. You will advance automatically to the right hand of God the Mother-Father Almighty.

They about ready? Excellent.

Here it all starts, my dears. Feel the light burning across your new-old body. Recognitions will soon occur.

Our lines will now dissolve. Mill, ogle, scout, waggle, point, chat, giggle, gab, prod, whatever. Freely: good. Keep gazing—good—freely at your classmates' last innocent ties to the old, corrupted world. Good. Touch. Should you come upon anyone you simply *know*, then by all means, blurt! Don't get shy on us now!

This pretty much ends our first bulletin.

Observe, fondle, stroke, Indian-wrestle, handhold. Try several brands of hearty handshakes to make sure. Shout a beloved name. Feel each other, feel each other up, my darling sudden angels. You're allowed now, anything, always.

Pray continue.

We have only time here. You'll all soon be absolutely crazy about each other. Fascinated, and I mean forever. Here, no one will ever leave you again.

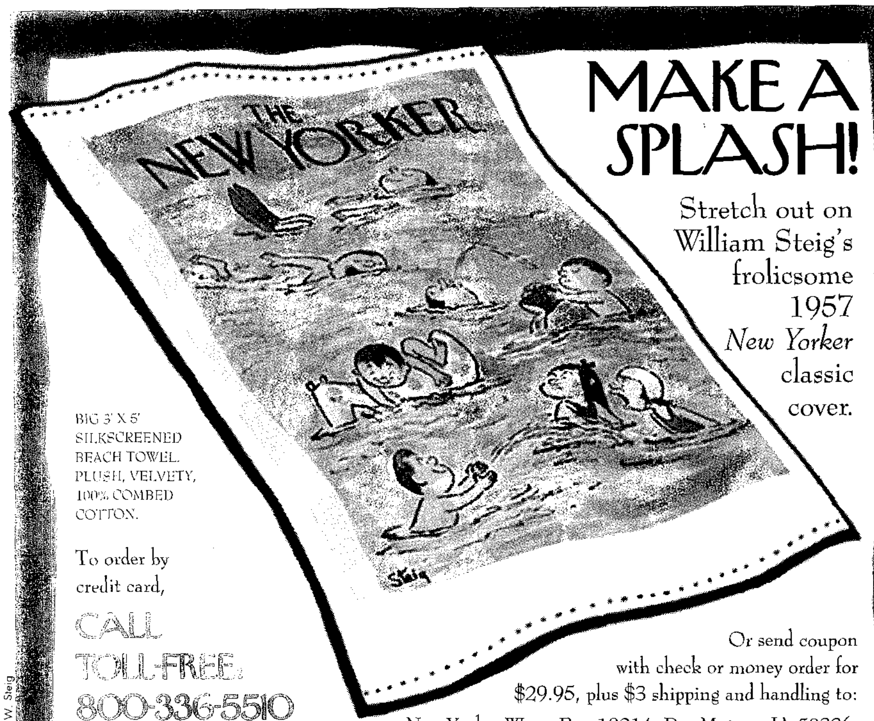
Heaven's code name is "Hello."

You have managed. You persisted when "wiser ones" turned back. Others retreated toward mere dignity, security. They are in Hell or, worse, nowhere. You chanced loving those who, trying, just . . . could . . . not . . . quite . . . fully . . . love . . . you . . . back.

Let true pleasure—innocent and richly deep—at last begin. How can you know you've just found Paradise?

You will have found perfect, funny, erotic company eternally.

Turn to face those recent angels nearest you. Nine words are burned deep into the gate of Heaven: "You have only just begun to know each other." ♦



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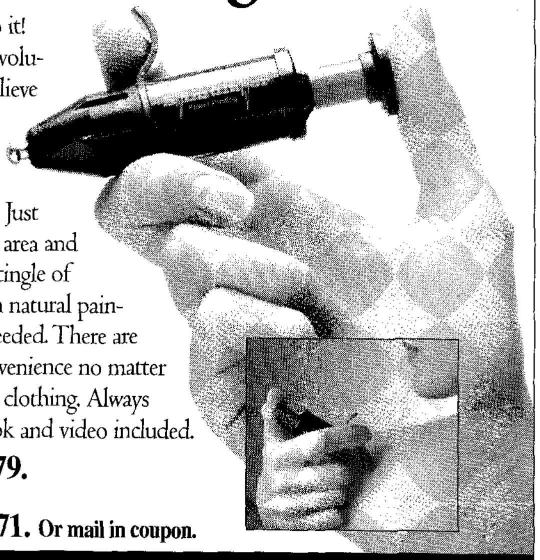

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MAHLERMANIA

The cult composer undergoes another metamorphosis.

BY ALEX ROSS

I FIRST encountered the name Mahler as graffiti on concrete. Sometime in the mid-seventies, a scofflaw painted a French horn and the legend “Mahler Lives” across the pylon of a railway bridge in Washington, D.C. These cryptic signs beckoned to me as I rode past in an overcrowded school bus, tuning out my classmates’ mass rendition of “We Are the Champions.” In subsequent years, I tried to develop a taste for Mahler’s symphonies, but they made no sense next to those of Beethoven and Brahms. Then, like many people, I had my mind changed by Leonard Bernstein. The great Mahler epigone led the “Resurrection” Symphony at the National Cathedral; it was one of his concerts aimed at abolishing nuclear weapons. I infiltrated a rehearsal and looked at a conductor’s score that had been left open on the seats. I was awestruck at how simple figures on the page could turn into sound as massive as the cathedral’s pillars. “Louder! Longer!” Bernstein shouted over the apocalyptic percussion crescendo in the final movement. It seemed like music’s revenge on an unmusical world, noise trampling on noise.

While Gustav Mahler could not rival Jim Morrison or Frodo Baggins as a graffiti icon, he aroused enormous cult enthusiasm in the nineteen-sixties and seventies. After decades of slow progress, he abruptly became one of the most popular of composers, ranking with Mozart, Beethoven, and Pachelbel, and his symphonies tested the outer limits of stereo recording. Ken Russell and Luchino Visconti made movies about him—or, at least, around him. Sondheim saluted him in “The Ladies Who Lunch.” The prime mover behind the Mahlermania in this country was, of course, Bernstein, whose utterances ranged from the ridiculous (“Mahler is groovy”) to the bombastic (“Ours is the century of death, and Mahler is its musical prophet”), but whose performances touched the sublime. In a classic turnabout, a composer who had been dismissed as neurotic, morbid, vulgar, and grandiose was now celebrated as neurotic, morbid, vulgar, and grandiose.

Anyone who thought that the taste for Mahler would die off with Bernstein was grievously mistaken. In May, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, in Amsterdam, presented a Mahler festival louder and longer than any other. It was an unprecedented alignment of the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Concertgebouw itself; it was underwritten by Royal Dutch Petroleum and the Netherlands telephone company; and it engendered a six-pound program book entitled “Gustav Mahler: The World Listens.” Meanwhile, Henry-Louis de La Grange has issued the second volume of a multivolume opus that threatens to become the largest musical biography since Ernest Newman’s life of Wagner. Gilbert Kaplan, the millionaire Mahler fanatic, has published every known photograph of the composer; and another Kaplan-sponsored publication, the “Mahler Discography,” lists more than eleven hundred recordings of twenty works. The countercultural prophet is gone, replaced by Mahler the global symphonic conglomerate.

For most of the century, the Mahler cult profited from sentimental, idealized images. Bernstein’s vision of a tremulous soul in love with martyrdom and death completed a tradition of hyperbole that had begun in 1912 with Schoenberg’s declaration “Gustav Mahler was a saint.” In the introduction to La Grange’s first volume, the composer Karlheinz Stockhausen went as far as to say, “Mahler was only transitorily a human being.” Mahler’s music, with its air of mystical catastrophe, easily provokes this sort of writing. Everyone knows his swooning intensity of emotion: not only the famous grandeurs and sufferings but also the intermedi-

Divine rightness: “And he saw that it was good,” Mahler said upon hearing the first movement of his Third Symphony.

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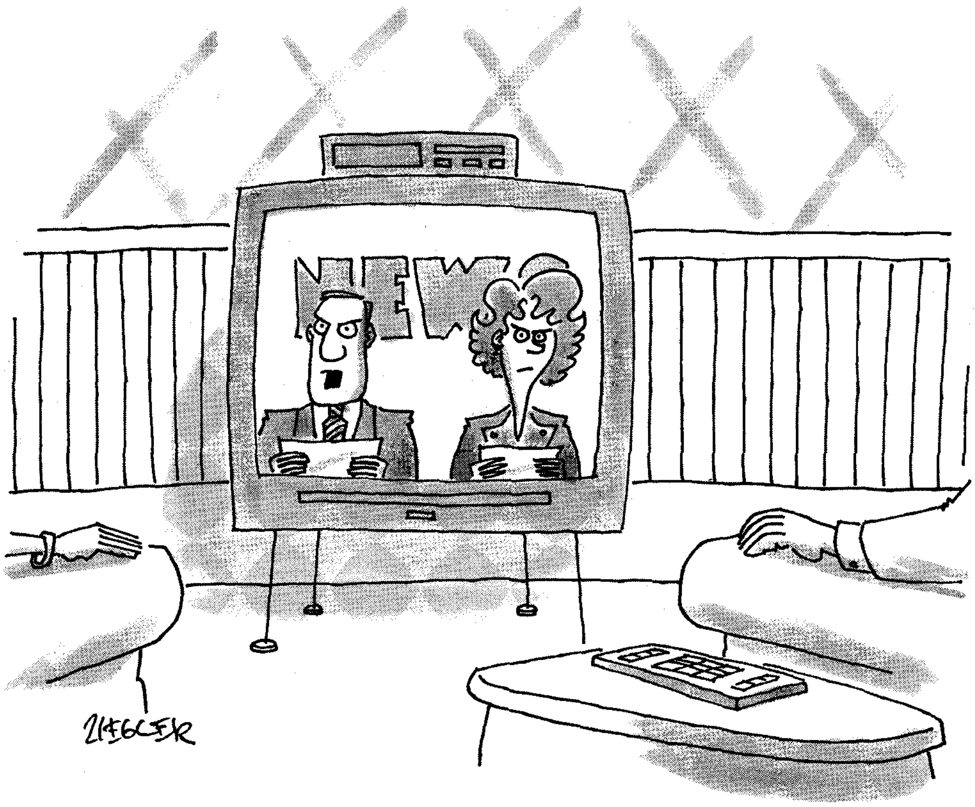


"Now here's my co-anchor, Nancy, with a conflicting account of that very same story."

• •

ate states of waltz-time languor, kitsch-drenched sweetness and sadness, medieval revelation, military rancor, dissonant delirium, adagio lament. Mahler's symphonies and songs, despite their carefully controlled formal underpinnings, inspire deeply subjective comprehension, a feeling of possession: I alone understand.

The vast documentation now available to Mahler scholars makes it clear that there was a knowing, calculating mind at work behind these tumults of subjectivity. Mahler was, indeed, neurotic and morbid; he was also one of the most strong-willed people who have ever lived. Having become the dominant conductor of his generation, he voiced an alarming certainty that his compositions would reign after his death. He predicted, quite correctly, that his music would be played at festivals consecrated to him, and he expected the world to change as a result. Music was superior to man, equal to nature. Passing beneath the Austrian Alps, he said to Bruno Walter, "No need to look, I have already composed them." At Niagara Falls he shouted, "At last, a real fortissimo!" The mountains and the waters were not an inspiration for music but a preliminary sketch for music. He was the Austrian Wilde, celebrating art over life; but he was dead serious. The core of Mahler, as Romain Rolland once jealously observed, is power.

LA GRANGE'S "Gustav Mahler: Vienna, The Years of Challenge" (Oxford; $45) narrates the decisive years of Mahler's career, the period from 1897 to 1904. After a relentless rise through the opera-house circuit of Central Europe, this thirty-seven-year-old son of a Bohemian tavern keeper was appointed head of the court opera house in the chief musical city of the world. His dismissal of beloved stars, his restoration of cuts, his termination of premature applause, his advocacy of Mozart, his invention, with the painter Alfred Roller, of modern opera production—all this changed the way music was heard. He kept to an insanely hectic schedule of performances, appearances, tours, travels, conversations, negotiations, and affairs. In an unexpected fit of domesticity, he married the twenty-two-year-old Alma Schindler. And, on summer vacations, he composed his Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Symphonies.

The fundamental wonder of Mahler's career is how he managed to achieve so much as a composer in so little time. His creative schedule—drafting evening-length works over vacations lasting from six to eight weeks—made him look like a crazed dilettante to professional colleagues. After his student days, there were no preparatory efforts, no workmanlike exercises. (Four student symphonies apparently disappeared in the Dresden bombings.) He staked his career on only two forms, song and symphony. There was no room for error; and he did not step wrong. Before him, only Wagner had produced such a strenuous sequence of major works. In his Vienna period, Mahler set aside the programmatic spectacle of his first three symphonies and entered a world of abstract instrumental expression: the sweetly ironical neoclassicism of the Fourth, the warring styles and sonorities of the Fifth, the brutally concentrated tragic narrative of the Sixth. These isolated, rapidly sketched works were conceived out of a sense of divine rightness: whatever was written down must be. "And he saw that it was good," Mahler said upon hearing the first movement of his Third Symphony—the same creation that had made the Alps superfluous.

On the podium of the Vienna Court Opera, Mahler's colossal assurance shaded into megalomania. He presented his philosophy of conducting in these unpleasant terms: "I frighten each musician into abandoning his little ego and soaring above himself." It is sometimes said in Mahler's defense that his dictatorial methods served to advance high artistic aims, but the critical descriptions in La Grange's book suggest that his way with Beethoven, Wagner, and other favorites grew willfully mannered and self-absorbed. He became reliant on instrumental "retouchings" that served to Mahlerize the whole historical repertory. (The Mahler fad has reached its nadir in the recent vogue for performances of these bloated rescorings, reverently called the *Retuschen.* It is possible to imagine how certain changes—an E-flat clarinet squawking in the

"Eroica"—might have had an electrifying effect in Mahler's hands; it is also easy to understand why many people became infuriated by them.)

Mahler's urge to mold the world extended into his personal life. His marriage to Alma Schindler was yet another masterpiece, joyous and tragic by turns; Alma was not given much freedom in her role. He approached her with genuine ardor but also with calculated need: he had built a handsome villa on the Wörther See, and he wanted a wife to decorate it. As if following a diagram of wifely nature, he demanded that the musically gifted Alma cease composing. "I wonder what this obsession is that has fixed itself in that little head I love so indescribably dearly, that you must be and remain yourself," he wrote to her on the eve of their engagement. "You," he continued, "have only *one* profession from now on: *to make me happy*." Alma is often attacked by Mahler scholars as an inaccurate diarist and an unfaithful wife; La Grange closes his book with portents of her affair with Walter Gropius, and he has elsewhere speculated that she more or less killed Mahler. (Katia Mann also subscribed to this theory.) Reading the couple's prenuptial correspondence, one feels greater sympathy for Alma. She, too, had been retouched.

La Grange, a baron of ancient lineage who has spent his life in Mahler's service, does not speak ill of his subject. In an age of surly biographies, his tireless devotion is somewhat refreshing. (The first volume, in English, appeared back in 1973; a complete three-volume life was published in France over the next decade. The new English volume, confusingly, is the second of a projected four books, and much material from Volume I is duplicated in it.) Alas, the stupendous results of his research are not given a narrative momentum appropriate to Mahler's kinetic career. This nine-hundred-page tome—one page for every four days of the composer's life over seven years—is a glacier flow of repetitions, digressions, touristic descriptions of Austrian landscapes ("The light green of deciduous trees contrasts with the darker green of conifers"), numbing trivia ("Universitätstrasse 6, second floor, door 5" is one address), small errors and oddities (La Grange supplies birth dates for Alma's father, stepfather, half sisters, and maternal grandparents, but neglects to give one for Alma herself), and half-digested musical jargon ("Adornian *Einsturz*" is a phrase that needs elucidation for those who have not read Theodor Adorno's "Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy," and even for those who have).

What we have is not a biography but a chronological Mahler encyclopedia. As such, it is still indispensable. Take, for example, the long, gruelling passages devoted to the critics. Whenever Mahler conducts or his music is played, La Grange permits every small-minded scribbler in Central Europe to rise and deliver his morning judgment in turn; the book takes on the pacing of a gymnastics competition. It is almost a relief to reach a performance of Mahler's Third in Mannheim and discover that the local newspaper archives were blown up during the war. One can easily skip these Philistine diatribes, as La Grange defensively suggests in his preface. Sometimes he seems to be skipping them himself; he writes of one concert, "For once, Mahler was not accused of eclecticism," then inserts a review hailing Mahler as "a master at appropriating other people's means of expression." Yet there is much to be gained from wading through it all. One feels the obstacles in Mahler's path and the toughness he needed to overcome them.

La Grange also spends a fair amount of time and space trying to assimilate Mahler into the world of fin-de-siècle Vienna. Chroniclers of the glittery decadence of Klimt, Hofmannsthal, and Schnitzler have similarly attempted to rope Mahler in, with limited success. True, the Court Opera's impressionistic, intricately stylized productions of "Tristan und Isolde," "Fidelio," and "Don Giovanni" were among the prize exhibits of progressive Vienna. But Mahler's contact with Klimt and other artists associated with the Secession movement came almost exclusively through Alma. He did develop a paternal interest in the young Arnold Schoenberg ("that conceited puppy"), but he had little use for the others. Mahler's literary interests were far-flung but in no way up-to-date; he remained fond of the fantastical, antiquated Romantic novelist Jean Paul, and he adulated Dostoyevski at a time when Ibsen and Strindberg were the rage. Unlike his sometime friend and rival Richard Strauss, who allied himself with the most fashionable talents of the age, Mahler joined nothing.

GILBERT KAPLAN'S sumptuous collection of photographs, "The Mahler Album" (Kaplan Foundation/Abrams; $75), attests to the fiery singularity of Mahler's personality. In his memorial essay, Schoenberg again veered into mysticism as he tried to describe Mahler's face: "The thoughts and feelings that moved this man have created a form." Mahler was conscious of his godlike profile; there are pictures in which a number of people look amiably at the camera while he glares stonily off to one side. When he is pictured in conversation, he looks absorbed but distant. In one series, he chats with a man identified as Thomas Mann. (Possibly, although I have never seen a photograph of Mann wearing sideburns.) There is something very strange in the snapshots of Mahler striding through the Vienna streets: twentieth-century paparazzi have overtaken nineteenth-century genius.

One picture I find particularly spooky. It was taken in Graz, in 1906, on the afternoon of a performance of Strauss's "Salome." Strauss, tall and sporty in a boater, stands at a door greeting Mahler, who, for once, looks small, nervous, and unimpressive. This Austrian première of "Salome" drew an unusual array of personalities: Mahler, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and Puccini. Two others attended, but no one saw them. One was the composer Adrian Leverkühn, who exists only in the pages of Mann's "Doktor Faustus," written four decades later. The other was the seventeen-year-old Adolf Hitler, who had travelled alone to Vienna to see Mahler conduct "Tristan" and then (as he later told Strauss's son) made a detour to Graz for "Salome." Unbelievably, when Hitler moved to Vienna, a few years later, he was given a letter of introduction to Roller, the "Tristan" designer, who had somehow been persuaded to look at his paintings. Hitler did not make use of the opportunity.

We are accustomed to read that Mahler was driven from Vienna by the same current of anti-Semitism that eventually swept Hitler to power. Anti-Semitism certainly played a role in his departure, but it should be remembered that most directors of the Vienna opera, Jewish or not, have been subject to the same cycle of enthusiasm and revulsion. A Catholic convert out of necessity and also out of vague conviction, Mahler neither exulted in his Jewishness nor agonized greatly over the attacks on it. Yet his ambivalence about his Jewish origins ran very deep. La Grange obscures the issue, pursuing a false contrast between Mahler and the self-loathing satirist Karl Kraus; they were not really so far apart. Kraus wrote many words against the Jews, and Mahler did not, but then Mahler did not write words for a living. His music sometimes says the same thing. Everyone agrees that the satiric wedding dances in the third movement of the First Symphony have a Jewish flavor. Few have commented that the dissonances of the finale descend upon them, without pause, like a holy scourge. I think the same progression can be heard in the Fifth Symphony: faintly Yiddish funeral music in the first movement, stumbling toward oblivion; impeccable Lutheran chorales in the finale, riding toward triumph. "Mahler never hid his Jewish origins," said Roller. "But he had no joy from them."

Mahler considered himself German above all—not a German national citizen but a Greater German artist in the spiritual tradition of Goethe. His life's mission was to bring his work into the canon of German culture. According to myth, Mahler cared nothing for acceptance in his lifetime, but La Grange's book reveals how popular several of the symphonies became after 1902, and how hard Mahler worked to achieve that popularity. Indeed, toward the end of his Viennese tenure, critics complained that he took too much time off from the opera to propagate his symphonies across Europe. And more career planning went into the works themselves than mystical Mahlerians would care to admit. The Fourth Symphony was designed to be classical and accessible compared with the elephantine Second and Third. Strangely, it turned out to be unacceptably shocking, while the two previous symphonies drew large crowds. After the instrumental experiments of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh, Mahler bestowed the Eighth as a German choral festival, "a gift to the whole nation." He thus earned himself another exploratory period—the liminal voyaging of "Das Lied von der Erde" and the Ninth and Tenth Symphonies.

MUCH of the early confusion over Mahler's works came from their monolithic quality: they could not be divided up and judged in parts. Vienna at the turn of the century was still steeped in amateur musicianship, and orchestral compositions were often first assessed in four-hand piano arrangements. Mahler's architecture crystallized only in performance. Viennese expertise also gave rise to early accusations that Mahler was an incessant plagiarist, a pasticheur, a manufacturer of "gigantic symphonic potpourris." The audience found in his works echoes not only of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Wagner, and Bruckner but also of the second and third tiers of German Romanticism, the likes of Goetz and Goldmark. One composer, the unlucky Hans Rott, was swallowed whole: he studied alongside Mahler at the Vienna Conservatory, went mad in 1880 ("Brahms has filled this train with dynamite!"), and left behind a Symphony in E that overflows with Mahlerian material. The opening of Mahler's Sixth is plainly modelled on Schubert's A-minor Sonata (D. 784): a grim march; falling figures in minor thirds; held half notes followed by curt eighth notes; dotted rhythms. The savage up-and-down motive in the finale of Brahms's F-minor Quintet reappears in the Fifth Symphony and in the Rondo Burleske of the Ninth. These resemblances are, again, more easily seen than heard. Mahler possessed the central attribute of the major mind: the ability to transform patriarchs into precursors.

Mahler's habit of patching together fragments of all the music he had heard was denounced in his lifetime as his great failing. Now it seems his principal genius. He invented a larger polyphony—an epic multiplicity of voices, accents, styles, spaces. His super-counterpoint was nothing particularly modern, but, rather, the logical extreme of Romanticism—cultured chaos, in Schlegel's definition. Its cultivation was in its fabulous narrative intricacy. As Adorno observed, the symphonies are like novels, the ever evolving themes like characters who despair, mature, remember, and forget. Giant structures are built up, reach to the major-key heavens, then suddenly collapse in downward chromatic swoops and shuddering dissonances. It is at these moments of collapse ("Adornian *Einsturz*") that the composer is most in control, wielding his novelistic power over destiny.

The aura of power played out in different ways for Mahler. It gave him freedom, but it also postponed the full acceptance of his music. The Viennese playwright and critic Hermann Bahr caught this paradox perfectly: "His personality stood between his works and the public. His personal impact was so strong that most people could not reach over it to his work, some because of their admiration and love for him, others because of envy, fury, and hatred. He had first to die for his work to become free." He was a great character, a virtuoso presence in the day-to-day life of Vienna, and at the same time a solitary creator. Improbable enough in his lifetime, he now seems completely impossible: who can imagine a musician governing a city? By the time he reached New York, where he conducted from 1908 until his fatal illness in 1911, he had already become something of a walking phantom. (A New York Philharmonic musician saw him on the subway to Brooklyn during those years, staring blankly.) Mahler once said of himself and Richard Strauss, "My time will come when his is past." In truth, Mahler's time has come only when Mahler's time is past.

In a pungent irony, Mahler's obsolescence as a personality was demonstrated at the first festival consecrated to him. The recent survey in Amsterdam marked the anniversary of a Mahler festival that was organized by Willem Mengelberg in 1920. On the periphery of that event, composers gathered for a series of Modern Chamber Music Concerts, which led, in turn, to the International Society for Contemporary Music. "Modern music"—complex, concentrated, proudly marginal music, needing separate institutional support—came into being. The mainstream repertory devolved upon the dead and great, in whose company

Mahler now suddenly loomed. Schoenberg and others drew inspiration from Mahler's intellectuality, his effects of estrangement, his pursuit of the exceptional, his music about music. But they abandoned his ambition to speak to the crowd. Music passed gently into the domain of specialists.

Mahler's towering, tormenting presence in music today makes me think of the dark fiddler in Yeats's prose poem "The Golden Age," which is set in a speeding train:

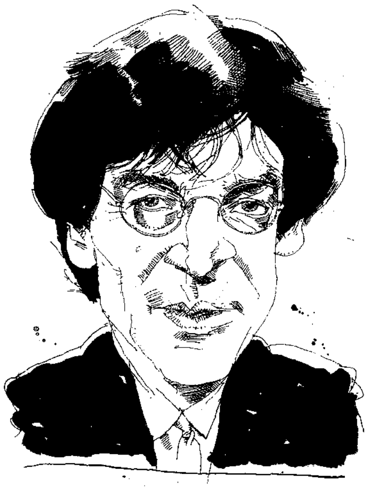
> A man got into the carriage and began to play on a fiddle made apparently of an old blacking-box, and though I am quite unmusical the sounds filled me with the strangest emotions. I seemed to hear a voice of lamentation out of the Golden Age. It told me that we are imperfect, incomplete, and no more like a beautiful woven web, but like a bundle of cords knotted together and flung into a corner. It said that the world was once all perfect and kindly, and that still the kindly and perfect world existed, but buried like a mass of roses under many spadefuls of earth. . . . It said that with us the beautiful are not clever and the clever are not beautiful, and that the best of our moments are marred by a little vulgarity, or by a needle-prick out of sad recollection, and that the fiddle must ever lament about it all. It said that if only they who live in the Golden Age could die we might be happy, for the sad voices would be still; but they must sing and we must weep until the eternal gates swing open.

Mahler lives. ♦

IN DEFENSE OF REASON

The continuing education of a French radical.

BY PAUL BERMAN



Alain Finkielkraut

IN May, 1968, the students of France staged a mass uprising, and the teenaged Alain Finkielkraut was one of the revolutionaries. He marched in the streets, chanted the chants, and afterward embraced the life of a left-wing militant (though not so ardently as to drop out of school, which was lucky). He became the proponent of an arcane Marxism that went by the name of "autonomism," a doctrine of the avant-garde. He insisted on his Jewishness, too. You could say that because of his activism, his left-wing arcana, and his ethnic ostentation he was an emblematic personality of the '68 generation, quite as recognizable to Americans as to the French (and, in fact, he spent some time in California in the nineteen-seventies, as was de rigueur for the brainiest of French brains). Yet after a few years his entire way of thinking came crashing down around him, and, instead of simply tiptoeing out of the rubble, like so many other ex-student leftists, he sat down to rethink almost everything he had observed and experienced.

He began with his ethnic pride. Jean-Paul Sartre drew a famous distinction between an "inauthentic Jew," who suppresses his Jewishness, and an "authentic Jew," who proclaims it and fights against anyone who objects. Finkielkraut, in his days of student leftism, naturally thought of himself as boldly "authentic." But now he had to wonder what, exactly, this Jewishness of his consisted of. There is an old-fashioned idea—a bit of treasured lore from the traditionally racist ultra-right—that Jewishness is transferred biologically, parents to children. From that point of view, yes, Finkielkraut's identity was beyond challenge. Yet as soon as he paused to look he could see a world of difference between himself and his parents. His parents were immigrants from Poland who had managed to survive the Nazis. They had known the Yiddish-speaking culture of the European Jews when it was a flourishing thing, which Finkielkraut the son could know only in his imagination. He was certainly

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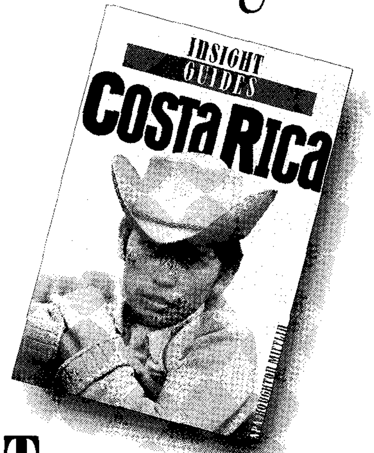

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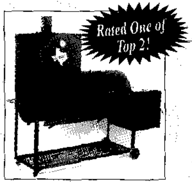

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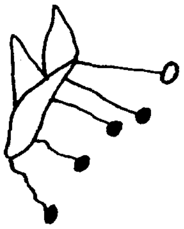
not what Sartre would consider an inauthentic Jew, but, compared with his parents, neither was he authentic. He was a third kind of person: an "imaginary Jew."

So he looked at himself and laughed, because of what a fraud he had been, flaunting his empty Jewishness to the world; and wept, because of the sudden lack that he now recognized; and felt a great gushing up of love and regret for his parents, who had brought him up to be a perfect little Frenchman, in order to protect him, and had not been able to give him what had once been theirs, because it was dead. And he realized that this love was itself a key to his Jewish heart. The book that he wrote on these themes, "The Imaginary Jew" (translated by Kevin O'Neill and David Suchoff; Nebraska; $25), is brilliant and rueful and bitter at the same time. It shows the joint influence of Sartre and Philip Roth—a combination that only Alain Finkielkraut could bring off. But, as the author himself points out, the book is incomplete. By the end, you can see that Finkielkraut is going to have to find a new direction for himself, and you wonder what this will be. Will he plunge into Talmud study? Talmud study, believe it or not, was the next step for quite a few disillusioned Jewish leftists from the French student movement. Or will he move to Israel? Or undergo psychoanalysis?



The answer appears in a second book, which has now been presented to the American public—"The Defeat of the Mind" (translated by Judith Friedlander; Columbia; $22.95). Finkielkraut took the criticism that he had made of his own Jewish identity, embellished the argument, extended it, noted what various philosophers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had said on all relevant issues, and, at last, concluded that great swaths of modern opinion about culture and identity are no more impressive or profound than his own student ideas about Jewish authenticity had been.

Ours is a high-minded age, and most of us like to picture ourselves as stalwart foes of every kind of prejudice, élitism, and oppression. But Finkielkraut notices that the more we push ourselves to be enlightened and unprejudiced the more we sink back into everything we meant to oppose. In our eagerness to repudiate anything smacking of old-fashioned imperialism, we seize on the principles of modern anthropologists, who insist on regarding the culture of one society as fully equivalent to the culture of another. We applaud ourselves for discovering that our own culture is merely one among many, and is not to be seen as anything superior. But, having set out in the morning along that admirably egalitarian path, we find by about noon that we are obliged to describe the democratic notions of human rights and freedom as merely anthropological traits peculiar to our own culture, and, not wishing to impose our local customs on anyone else, we are obliged by nightfall to conclude that human rights and democracy are fine for us and other customs are fine for other people. Freedom for us, oppression for others (for such is their culture, and we must respect it). Our passion for equality demands nothing less!

Finkielkraut detects a similar fatal slide in our discussions of cultural education. We begin with the anti-élitist idea that culture must be available to all, not just to the rich and the blue-blooded. Then we advance to the idea that the culture of the masses ought not to be regarded as inferior to the culture of the élite. Finally, we affirm that people ought to be congratulated for the knowledge and taste that they already have, and need not be educated to appreciate what is currently beyond them. In short, élite culture for us élites, mass culture for the masses. And once again we enemies of snobbery and inequality have worked our way into accepting the old, reactionary idea that everyone holds an allotted place, high or low, in the social order, and ought to stay there and be happy about it. For we have forgotten that culture is more than a set of anthropological customs, and instead is a product of reading and education and thought; is not biologically transmitted; is something we have to strive for.

In recent years, French philosophers have acquired a reputation for writing essays so woolly as to be unreadable even in their own language. But Finkielkraut has reverted to an earlier, superior mode of French writing. It is a style of lucidity and logical reasoning, which in these two books, "The Imaginary Jew" and "The Defeat of the Mind," comes to us slightly chipped and dented, owing to the unavoidable hardships of translation (plus some avoidable hardships in the form of straight-out errors). "The Imaginary Jew" is the better book from a literary point of view, because of its charming humor and self-consciousness. In "The Defeat of the Mind" Finkielkraut sometimes comes off as a scold, airily instructing us on which arts should be held in high esteem (literature, Duke Ellington) and which in low (movies, rock).

And yet "The Defeat of the Mind" was a big success when it came out in France, eight years ago, and you can see why. Finkielkraut has the kind of talent for generalization which allows his subject to be vast and his book to be short and the reader to be satisfied even so. His final chapter, less than half a page long, offers a vivid cartoon image that sums up his nightmare of life in an age when the last, lingering loyalties to the higher ideals of culture have disappeared. He pictures a terrible and laughable encounter between the "fanatic" and the "zombie." By fanatic he means the zealous champions of identity politics, of fundamentalist purity and intolerant nationalisms (whom we have been instructed to regard with respect, and who themselves feel under no compunction to reflect on their own ideas). By zombie he means the brainless consumers of the mass media (i.e., we who have made ourselves into idiots by refusing to judge anything as better than anything else). On one side, the fanatics whose bloody deeds fill the evening news; on the other side, we zombies, who watch the evening news and feel that stopping fanatics is no business of ours. Ladies and Gentlemen, Finkielkraut wishes to announce, welcome to the age of barbarism. ♦

CULTURAL NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the London Times*]

11.25 FILM: *Baby Doll* (1956, b/w) starring Carroll Baker, Karl Malden and Eli Wallach. A controversial drama about the sexy child bride in an unconsummated marriage to a Southern cotton miller who is seduced for revenge by her husband's rival. Based on the Tennessee Williams play *27 Wagonloads of Cotton Nighties*. Directed by Elia Kazan.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Invention of Curried Sausage
by Uwe Timm; translated from the German by Leila Vennewitz
(New Directions; $19.95)

" 'Love consists of accommodating,' said wise Mrs. Brücker," telling the narrator how she sheltered a deserting German sailor in her Hamburg apartment during the weeks surrounding Hitler's death. Though she now has a husband, children, and grandchildren, the deserter's sojourn has remained the central episode of Lena Brücker's life and the inspiration for her livelihood—selling curried sausage. This short novel, whose realism is utterly at one with its persuasive romance, is equally inspired.

The Ukimwi Road
by Dervla Murphy
(Overlook; $22.95)

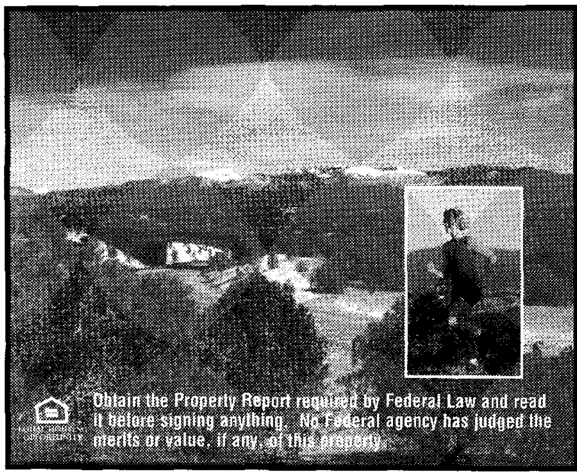
In this wonderful book, the noted travel writer takes us with her on a bicycle trip through Africa from Kenya to Zimbabwe, where an attack of malaria forces her to stop. As an Irishwoman, Murphy is generally unsympathetic to imperialism, and she concludes that postcolonial aid has been almost as destructive as colonial rule was. But Murphy is no uncritical admirer of things African: she points out how the low status of women contributes to the spread of AIDS—an omnipresent plague along her route which came, she relates, "most improbably, to dominate my journey."

London at War
by Philip Ziegler
(Knopf; $30)

Ziegler's superbly constructed portrait of London during the Second World War succeeds in depicting the heroism of the city's residents precisely because it also includes the less heroic—looters and muggers, whiners and shirkers. The author conveys the uneven tides of sentiment, from overconfidence during the Phony War of 1939-40 to iron endurance through the Blitz and frayed nerves under the random terror of the V-1 and V-2 rockets. He is ever alert to the ways in which shared dangers and privations undermined class distinctions and fostered a more egalitarian postwar nation.

The Last Harvest
by Paul Raeburn
(Simon & Schuster; $24)

This popular-science book explains that whenever we have created genetic uniformity in plants we have also created vulnerability to new pests; in recent years, a Russian wheat aphid, a Philippine corn fungus, and an "explosive" potato blight have devastated American crops. Raeburn discusses the value of biodiversity to human beings and provides a fascinating account of efforts to preserve old and wild plant species.



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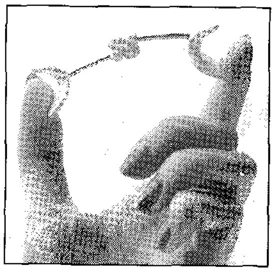

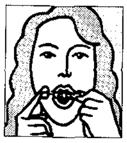

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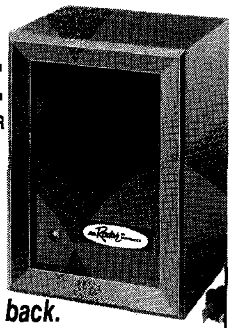

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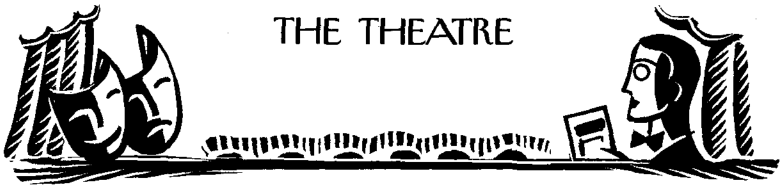


THE THEATRE

WHIZ KID OF THE WEST END

A Canadian "Cavalcade" revives the patriotic pageantry of Noël Coward.

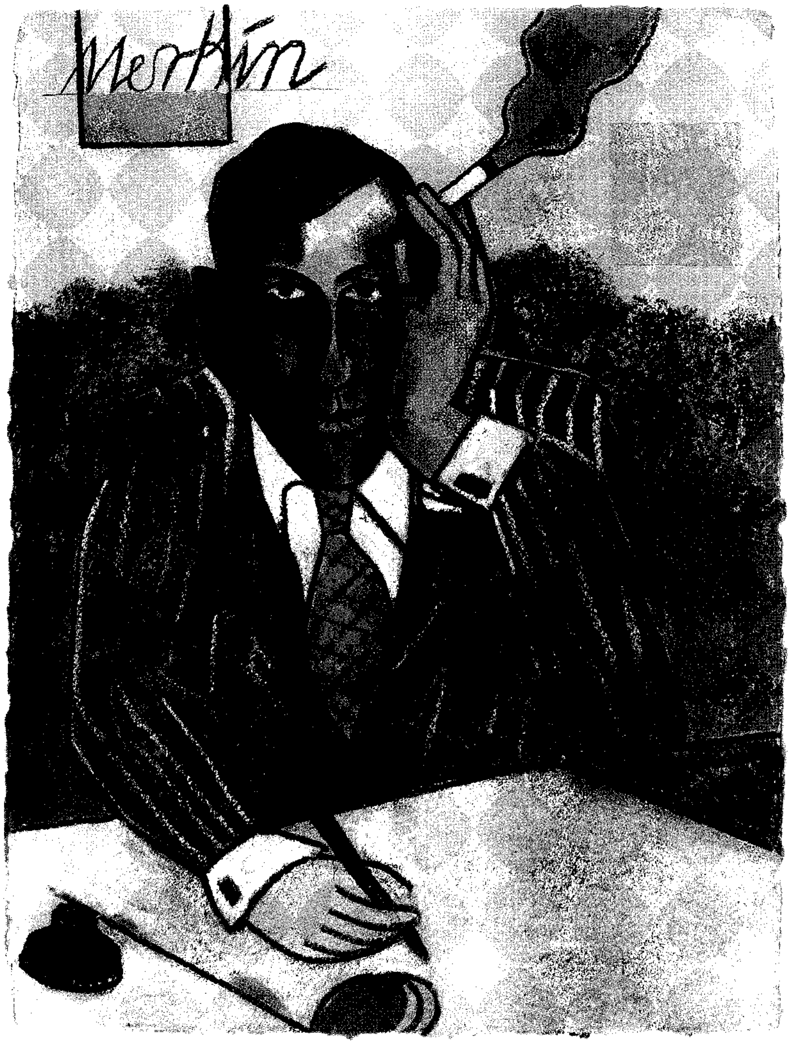
BY JOHN LAHR

WHEN Sir Noël Coward looked back on his life, he saw it as "one long extravaganza." He'd planned it that way. Coward was born in the London suburb of Teddington on December 16, 1899, and for much of his extraordinary theatrical career he resolutely managed to stay a step ahead of his century. Alexander Woollcott dubbed Coward "Destiny's Tot." He inspired the nineteen-twenties equivalent of Beatlemania, whipping audiences into a frenzy with his wit and his de-luxe persona. In 1923, a year before "The Vortex" became his first big stage hit, the audience at his comedy "The Young Idea" was shouting "Noël! Noël! Noël!" at the end of the opening-night performance, and newspaper headlines like "FIRST NIGHT LIKE A PARTY" were proclaiming his arrival. And at twenty-five Coward was, in his own words, "a big celebrated cookie." He had his first Rolls-Royce by the age of twenty-six, and his first biography when he reached thirty-three. He teased a culture of scarcity with a notion of abundance that his talent and his style came to personify. Coward had arrived on the English scene at a time of generational crisis. "Post-war Youth won the war," an *Evening Standard* editorial argued in 1924. "Youth ought to make the peace . . . but mere noise, high spirited defiance, is no substitute for service." In Coward, the contemporary sense of disillusionment and the Victorian work ethic coalesced. He was the young idea *and* the old, combining gaiety and courage, concealed pain and amusing malice. For five decades, he laid siege to the public, with some sixty stage productions, more than a dozen films, nearly three hundred songs, several volumes of short stories, a novel, and a three-volume autobiography. "Even the youngest of us will know in fifty years' time what we meant by 'a very Noël Coward sort of person,' " Kenneth Tynan wrote in 1961. It's still a safe prediction.

Coward streamlined both his plays and his persona, revealing only what was necessary. With his dressing gown and his suave, playful good manners, he defined the popular notion of swank. The work and the man had a disarming symmetry: they were clipped, bright, and confident. They simultaneously exploited and mocked the manners of the time. In the pithy dialogue and sprightly pacing of his plays, Coward brought English society up to speed and made it aware of the danger in the century's momentum: at a certain velocity, all things disintegrate. He was the first to articulate onstage the metaphysical exhaustion behind the twenties binge. He found words for this sense of collapse. In the song "Twentieth Century Blues"—it is the finale of the pageant "Cavalcade" (1931), which is being revived for the third time ("Back by popular demand!") at the Shaw Festival Theatre, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, through October—Coward spells out the disenchantment he expressed in the frivolity of his comedies "Hay Fever" (1925), "Private Lives" (1930), and "Design for Living" (1933):

> What is there to strive for,
> Love or keep alive for? Say—
> Hey, hey, call it a day.
> Blues, nothing to win or to lose.

An entrepreneur of Englishness, Coward gave shape to himself and to his time. "Cavalcade" is never going to win any prizes as literature, but it is nevertheless significant as a theatrical event. Over the decades, through his songs and plays, Coward somehow managed to maneuver his story so that it seemed to be England's story, too. He positioned himself at the heart of the popular history of his time; after "Cavalcade," he starred in successful sagas of England between the wars like "This Happy Breed" (1942), and then wrote, produced, co-directed, and starred in the naval war film "In Which We Serve" (1942). (The 1933 film of "Cavalcade" won an Academy Award for best picture, and Coward also received a special Oscar for "In Which We Serve.") Coward was not a thinker but a stylist, and these topical dramas do not stand up as historically significant. (The Irish playwright Sean O'Casey compared the characters in "Cavalcade" to "a tiny monogram on a huge bedspread.") But they do demonstrate Coward's technical skill and his ability to gather a national consensus around his showmanship. Winston Churchill understood this power: during the Second World War, he humbled Coward, who was eager to contribute his writing talents to the war effort, by telling him, "Go out and sing 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen' while the guns are firing—that's your job." In both war and peace, Coward was an engineer of hope, a kind of cultural confidence man, and "Cavalcade" is the epitome of what he called "pessimism with pep."



Noël Coward, entrepreneur of Englishness: with his suave, playful good manners, he defined the popular notion of swank.

"Cavalcade" was conceived as a theatrical mass maneuver in twenty-one scenes, covering the Boer War, the death of Queen Victoria, the First World War, and the shifting social landscape of postwar England as an emerging talentocracy began to displace the aristocracy. All this was told with a cast of more than two hundred, including a battalion of Grenadier Guards who marched from their barracks and onto the Drury Lane stage every night. In his opening-night curtain speech, Coward said to the audience, "I hope that this play made you feel that, in spite of the troublous times we are living in, it is still pretty exciting to be English." It was certainly exciting for Coward; and, although he later regretted the way his speech made the play seem to be merely propaganda for patriotism, it had the effect—as Coward's style and his wit always did have—of endearing him to the ruling classes. The show ran for four hundred and five performances, and installed Coward at the smug hot center of English life. "I have never felt the necessity of being 'with it,'" Coward joked years later. "I'm all for staying in my place."

THE Shaw Festival is the only professional theatre in North America that has ever offered a production of "Cavalcade," and for this alone it deserves a huzzah or two. The directors, Christopher Newton and Duncan McIntosh, have downsized the show, mustering a platoon of forty-six actors—just enough to fill the stage in the handsome, wood-panelled Festival Theatre. The downsizing has the effect of revealing the pageant's jerry-built structure. When Coward began work on "Cavalcade," he told the producer, C. B. Cochran, for whom he had written two revues, that he wanted to "test my . . . powers on a large scale." Coward was dedicated to showing off his prowess, not his political engagement. At the Shaw Festival, it's apparent that "Cavalcade" is essentially a revue, with more emphasis on grief than on gladness. Coward misses no opportunity to fill the tableaux of tragedy and triumph with song. He understood that the potency of cheap music had its effect not only on individuals but also on nation-states. In the Shaw Festival production, the tactic works best in a scene dealing with the slaughter of the First World War. Coward's stage directions call for the successive years of war to be displayed in lights above the proscenium while "soldiers march uphill endlessly" on the stage: "Out of darkness into darkness." Here we have to settle for an upstage dumb show filled with gunshots and bloodcurdling screams while in the foreground a musical counterpoint is staged between the Glitz Girls, a troupe of scantily clad chorines singing "I'll Make a Man of You," and the Feather Girls, a bevy of volunteers in mufti handing out white feathers to enlist more cannon fodder for the trenches as they sing "We Don't Want to Lose You."

The plot, such as it is, follows the lives of the upper-class Jane and Robert Marryot (Fiona Reid and Andrew Gillies) and their two sons, Edward (Roger Honeywell) and Joe (Ben Carlson), and of the family's decent servants, Alfred and Ellen Bridges (David Schurmann and Wendy Thatcher). The characters

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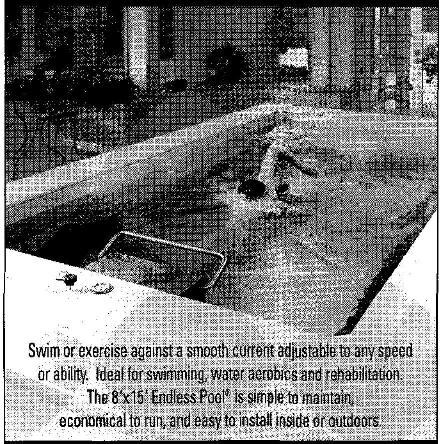

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begin by toasting a bright new century together and end, thirty years later, toasting a world so grief-stricken that it seems ancient. Although Coward himself was an upstart from the lower orders—he was the son of a travelling piano salesman, and he wrote that he was reared in circumstances that were "liable to degenerate into refined gentility unless carefully watched"—his depiction of the working class is always stereotypical: its members are jolly, hardworking, "h"-dropping comic cartoons given to occasional bouts of boozy violence. Old Alfred, who has risen from butler to publican, pays the price for his family's social ambitions by becoming a drunk. In the plays, Coward's strong suit is the playful edginess of his frivolity, but in "Cavalcade" there is no exhilaration over British bad manners—only self-congratulation on British gallantry. A pageant has more earnest ambitions than a comedy has; it abandons comedy's game of hide-and-seek for the spectacle of show-and-tell. Coward skates swiftly over thin ice, knowing that his safety lies in speed. Actors crowd the stage, each one having worked out little filigree details for his character, but no single performer takes up much stage time. Inevitably, the narrative technique is cinematic: it shifts the focus, even within scenes, from establishing shots to crosscuts and dissolves. This is most effective in a love scene featuring Edward Marryot and his new bride, Edith Harris (Tracey Ferencz), as they stand in their evening clothes at the rail of an ocean liner. The dialogue has the terse charm of the big romantic stuff Coward invented for his comic stage talk but none of the author's mischievous cunning:

> EDITH: It's too big, the Atlantic, isn't it?
> EDWARD: Far too big.
> EDITH: And too deep.
> EDWARD: Much, much too deep.
> EDITH: I don't care a bit, do you?
> EDWARD: Not a scrap.
> EDITH: Wouldn't it be awful if a magician came to us and said: "Unless you count accurately every single fish in the Atlantic you die to-night?"
> EDWARD: We should die to-night.

As they exit, Edith picks up her cloak from the rail. It has been covering a life belt labelled "S.S. Titanic."

The Shaw Festival's "Cavalcade" displays more perspiration than inspiration, and the absence of creative energy is nowhere more evident than in the show's notional finale. Coward set this scene, which he described as "chaos," in a night club, and conceived it as a metaphor for the jagged abrasiveness of contemporary life. The stage directions prescribe, "Across the darkness runs a Riley light sign spelling out news. Noise grows louder and louder. Steam rivets, loud speakers, jazz bands, aeroplane propellers." In this production, amazingly, all the agitation has been cut. The angularity that Coward called for in the set is replaced by slumped, narcotized bodies at the night-club tables. Coward's prescient evocation of the century's media whispering gallery and of the oppression of overload has disappeared. Although "Twentieth Century Blues" sings of disillusion—"We've reached a deadline, / A Press headline—every sorrow. / Blues value is news value tomorrow"—the production makes nothing of it. Instead, the directors have substituted a kind of silent, surreal freeze-frame of numbness at the strange Art Deco night club, where Alfred's daughter, Fanny (Lisa Waines), now a popular chanteuse, entertains. Sadly, Miss Waines has neither the charisma nor the chops to deliver the song, and the stage picture is as flat as her voice. A sense of momentum is conveyed only by the use of a revolving platform, on which the company stands and recapitulates bits of earlier scenes as it turns faster and faster, to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" (a nod to Germany and the coming decade of darkness).

Coward, of course, knew nothing much about politics but everything about his audience. He calls for the entire cast to assemble onstage for the finale, with the Union Jack above, and to sing "God Save the King." This, obviously, can't be done nowadays, when the English have neither a king nor the habit of standing to hymn royalty at the end of an evening. Instead, Coward's twin objectives—to display both his cynicism and his sentimentality—are fudged. Nonetheless, the audience stands and applauds as poppies are projected onto the set. Loss is made bearable. Coward's celebrated talent to amuse is so strong that he can make even carnage enchanting. On being asked how he thought he would be remembered, Coward replied, "By my charm." As "Cavalcade" demonstrates, this charm was both his greatness and his impoverishment. ◆

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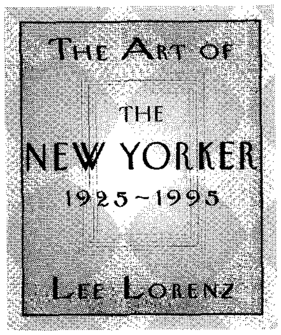

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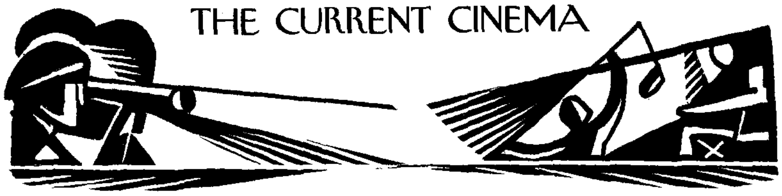
THE CURRENT CINEMA

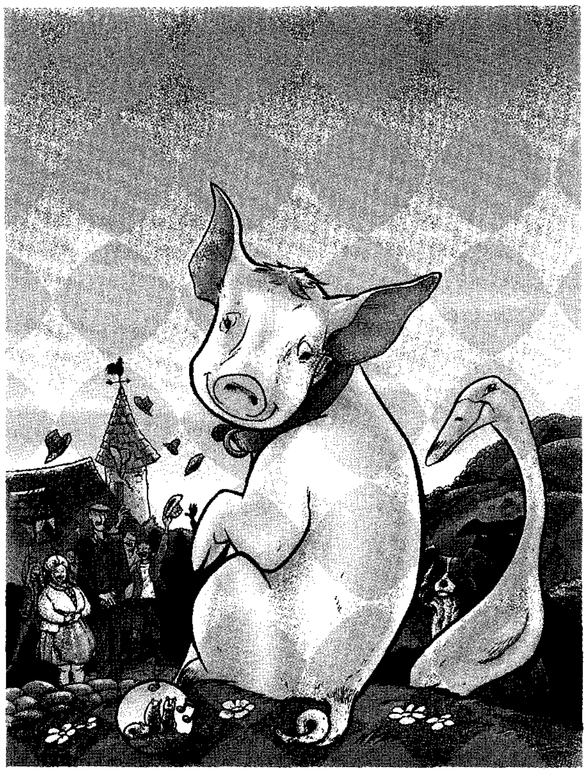


PET SOUNDS

The not-just-for-kids "Babe" and the return of Brian Wilson.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

THE title character of Chris Noonan's "Babe" is a piglet who wants to be a sheepdog. If you have any interest in animals, this will undoubtedly strike you as a great idea for a movie. If you don't, well, *be* that way. But understand, as you suffer through "Waterworld" or a dreary "adult" comedy like "Something to Talk About" or "The Brothers McMullen," that you're getting exactly the movie experience you deserve: "Babe" is too good for you. This picture is the surprise hit of the late-summer season, and it deserves to be: it's a lovely, stubbornly idiosyncratic fable of aspiration and survival—a comedy of animal manners that is much funnier and much cannier than any recent movie about human relationships. The screenplay, by Noonan and George Miller (he also produced), is adapted from a children's novel called "The Sheep-Pig," by the British writer Dick King-Smith. (The American title is "Babe, the Gallant Pig.") It's a simple story. Farmer Hoggett (James Cromwell), who raises sheep, wins a piglet in a guess-the-weight contest at a country fair and brings it home to let it grow into a nice big Christmas ham. But before Babe has been fattened up sufficiently for an appearance on the Hoggett table he forms a kind of familial bond with a female Border collie named Fly: after her litter has been sold off, Fly adopts the little pig (who misses his mother) as a surrogate puppy, and discovers that he has a peculiar rapport with the sheep. She realizes that if he learned a few tricks of the herding dog's trade he might become too valuable to kill; he could save his own bacon.



Babe with his friends: a pig who really doesn't know his place.

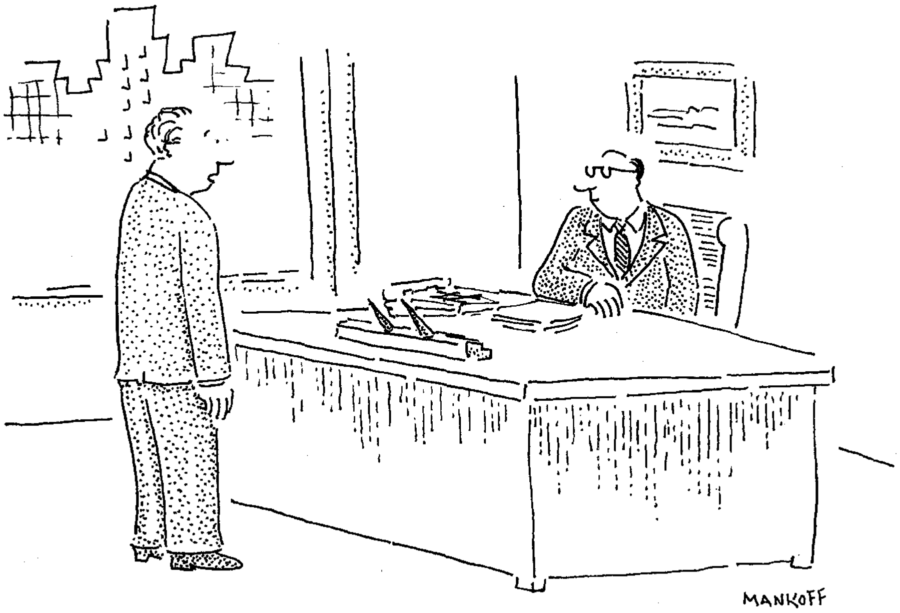
JEFF SMITH

The beauty of "Babe" is that, despite the fanciful story, both the drama and the humor are grounded in richly detailed observations of animal behavior. The Hoggett farm is depicted as an intricately structured social organism, with the human beings, Hoggett and his chubby wife (Magda Szubanski), as the ruling class; the other species survive by knowing their place and doing the jobs they were brought up to do. The Border collies, Fly and her aging husband, Rex, are the most sophisticated and the most highly skilled workers on the farm, and they know it: they're proud, imperious, and often impatient with the less versatile animals. Fly's arrogance is tempered by her maternal instincts, but Rex has the unyielding manner of a tough foreman: he demands rigorous adherence to his lofty professional standards. (He is outraged by his softhearted mate's notion that a pig can be trained to do the difficult work of a herding dog.) Both, however, are contemptuous of the sheep, whom they consider hopelessly stupid; the dogs keep the sheep in line by means of insult and intimidation—good enough for the likes of *them*. Fly and Rex tolerate the sheep only because they know that Farmer Hoggett needs the pathetic creatures for the wool they provide. A good dog understands what its master values. I live with a herding dog—an agile, alert, painstakingly conscientious German shepherd named Louis, who prides himself on always knowing just what to do—and the Border collies in "Babe" are the first movie dogs I've seen that do justice to the nervous dignity of his kind.

Babe, however, is a total innocent: he's not overburdened, as the dogs are, with responsibilities, or with an acute consciousness of the social principles of farm life. He looks at his new surroundings with an unprejudiced, childlike eye, and sweetly fails to recognize the prevailing differences in status among the species. He's polite to all the creatures, even the despised sheep; they appreciate his graciousness. Ultimately, the flock responds as readily to his precise, respectful requests as it does to the dogs' brusque commands. Babe's salvation is that he really doesn't know his place; he has no idea that a pig's only purpose, as far as its human overseers are concerned, is to be eaten. Miller and Noonan give him a comic role model (not in the novel) in a wily duck named Ferdinand, who, like him, is a candidate for Christmas dinner, and, unlike him, knows it. Ferdinand, a creative thinker, believes that he has figured out a way to persuade the Hoggetts that he's worth more alive than dead: every morning, he gets up before the rooster and quacks the human beings awake. This farmwise duck understands that, in his situation, if you're not willing to bend the rules you're cooked. And, if worst comes to worst, crime may be the only way out; in the movie's funniest sequence, Ferdinand enlists Babe's aid in a desperate mission to steal the Hoggetts' newly purchased alarm clock.

Fortunately, the filmmakers know how to bend the rules, too. Part of what makes "Babe" so delightful is the sheer unlikeliness of the whole enterprise. This is a picture in which the animals talk to each other. To call this a risky device would be to overstate its chances of success; in movie terms, it's the equivalent of sending a pig to round up a flock of sheep. But, just as the little porker winds up vindicating Farmer Hoggett's apparently lunatic belief in his herding ability, the movie's use of talking-animal technique makes Miller and Noonan look like visionaries. Of course, it's possible to go too far in anthropomorphizing the feelings of animals. The weird thing about "Babe" is that, despite its creatures' articulateness, they remain in character as animals: the movie never lets us forget that they don't see the world the same way we do. The filmmakers create the illusion of conversing animals with a variety of technical means, including computer-animated mouth movements and, here and there, animatronic stand-ins for the live-animal stars; it's almost impossible to detect the special-effects work, not only because the effects are so smoothly executed but also because the movie doesn't use them to distort the characters' faces into more "human" expressions. Babe (who is played by forty-eight different piglets) is devastatingly cute throughout, but it's a *piggy* cuteness; Fly and Rex maintain intense, unsmiling looks of doggy concentration. By giving us access to animals' thoughts through speech rather than through facial manipulations, Miller and Noonan are essentially committing a small deception in order to avoid perpetrating a more serious offense against nature; in this case, the end justifies, and even dignifies, the dicey means.

The moral of "Babe," after all, is: Whatever works. By the time this imaginative, hilariously eventful picture is over, you've just about forgotten that pigs don't herd and that talking-animal movies are unworthy of the attention of savvy, civilized viewers. Miller and Noonan cut a few corners, but they treat us with respect: they ask us to follow them, and we do, not because we feel we have to, or else, but because they've earned our trust. It's a wonderful movie for kids, because it preaches (and embodies) the virtue of refusing to live down to low expectations; it demonstrates, entertainingly, that there's no such thing as an inescapable, wholly determined destiny. That's a good lesson for any moviegoer, and especially for those who believe that they're too smart to buy a ticket to something like "Babe." If you go only to movies that are specifically designed for you and other members of your social class (or demographic category), you're not as intelli-



"Chief, I'd like a four-year sabbatical to prepare for the millennium."

gent as you think you are: to a studio executive, you're dinner.

LIKE "Babe," Don Was's black-and-white documentary "Brian Wilson: I Just Wasn't Made for These Times" is an improbable, eccentric pleasure. The movie, which recently opened at Film Forum (and has been shown on the Disney Channel), is an affectionate portrait of the pop-music wizard Brian Wilson, the prime mover of the Beach Boys. Even in the group's sixties heyday, Wilson was a mysterious, reclusive, and dauntingly odd figure: at the height of the Beach Boys' popularity, he stopped touring with the band and holed up in the recording studio, where he struggled to put on records the increasingly elaborate music he heard in his head. Wilson's mad-scientist aural experiments—progressing through a series of deceptively cheerful-sounding paeans to teenage hedonism, with titles like "Fun, Fun, Fun," "I Get Around," and "California Girls"—culminated in the ethereal harmonies and baroque arrangements of the 1966 album "Pet Sounds," which sealed his reputation as a genius. (In the movie, musician after musician speaks of it in reverent, awestruck tones.) But in the attempt to outdo himself with the Beach Boys' next album he undid himself instead: after months of sessions for that record, which was to have been called "Smile," he abandoned the ambitious project and seemed to withdraw even further from the other members of the band (which included his brothers, Dennis and Carl, and a cousin, Mike Love). Although he continued to work sporadically with the group, he spent most of his time at home, drinking and brooding and taking drugs and composing songs on a piano planted in the middle of a sandbox. Despite the gorgeous music that has occasionally, unpredictably, emerged in the years since, the general impression of Brian Wilson is that of a brilliant mind gone gaga—a casualty of drugs, depression, or its own unendurable complexity.

The fifty-two-year-old Brian Wilson we see in "I Just Wasn't Made for These Times" still looks a little shaky; he talks out of one corner of his mouth, like Crazy Guggenham, the befuddled barfly of the old Jackie Gleason show, and the stream of his consciousness follows a very erratic course. But he's not a wreck, and he's holding himself together well enough to make some terrific music. In the movie's terms, that's all that matters. Don Was is a rock musician himself—he's best known as a record producer—and his decision to focus primarily on his subject's art, even though he leaves a few gaps in the story, is refreshing. He marshals reminiscences from Wilson's friends, family, and collaborators (the only other Beach Boy represented is Carl), and testimonials from an unusually eclectic bunch of musicians: some whom you would expect to be Brian Wilson fans (David Crosby, Graham Nash, Linda Ronstadt) and some whose admiration is surprising (John Cale and Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore). But what gives the movie its immensely satisfying shape, and even, in a sense, its narrative drive, is a recording session in which Wilson, sitting at a piano and surrounded by L.A. session players and backup singers, belts out glorious new versions of a few of his best songs. Although some of the tunes are familiar, the set isn't constructed as a greatest-hits collection. The songs seem to have been selected according to a different, more personal, and perhaps unfathomable principle: the highlights are elusive, melancholy compositions ("The Warmth of the Sun," "Caroline, No," " 'Til I Die") and fragile semi-obscurities ("Wonderful," from "Smile," and "Love and Mercy," from Wilson's self-titled 1988 solo album). Wilson plays them with unaccountable fervor. In these performances, he seems to be opening his heart and revealing to us the essential paradox of his music: the bizarre coexistence of extreme, aching emotional simplicity with the most formidable artistic complexity. And, in the end, "I Just Wasn't Made for These Times" achieves a similar effect. The last number is an exuberant rendition of the upbeat "Do It Again," in which Wilson harmonizes ecstatically with his daughters, Wendy and Carnie, and the vibrations are miraculously good. Like the best pop songs, the picture leaves you feeling great; but that strong, direct emotion has been accomplished by hitting some awfully strange notes. It's the perfect conclusion to the biography of a man who can sing—as he does in " 'Til I Die"—"I lost my way, hey hey hey," and make it sound like the most beautiful and the most natural phrase you've ever heard. ♦

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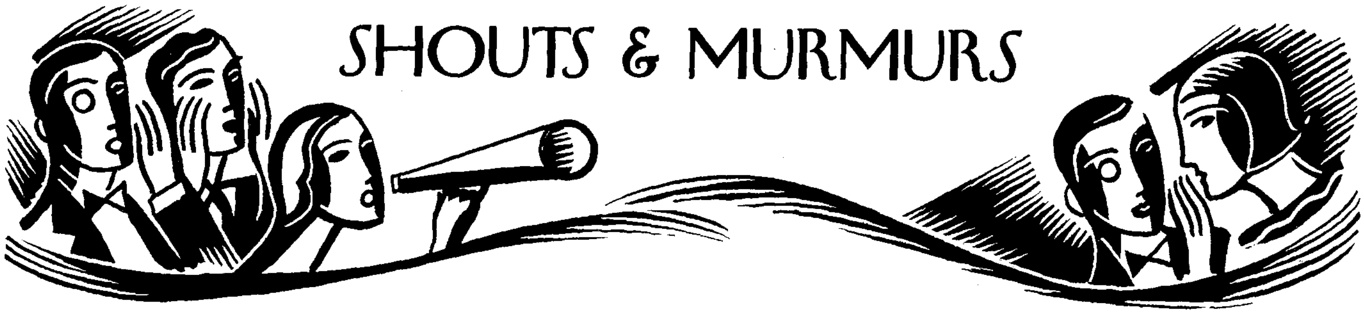


PHONE HEX

BY JOYCE CAROL OATES

“Dear Friend,” the invitation reads. “You are cordially invited to a special screening for our upcoming TriStar Pictures presentation: ‘Devil in a Blue Dress.’ ” What welcome news! You’re an admiring acquaintance of the mystery writer Walter Mosley, from whose best-selling novel the film has been made, so you R.S.V.P. at once, setting into motion the ensuing exchange—much abbreviated in this space, and from memory.

“Publicity, Columbia TriStar,” a youngish-sounding woman announces, already a bit impatient, so you give your name, explaining that you’re accepting the invitation to the screening of “Devil in a Blue Dress.” The young woman says, “Who? How do you spell your name?” You spell out your name carefully, last name first. Irritated, the young woman says, “Which name is that? I can’t hear you, Ma’am.” So you raise your voice gamely and spell out your name again, stumbling a little bit at this higher volume. “Listen, I can’t hear you, it’s like you’re long distance,” the woman says. “You’re gonna have to *speak up*.” So you raise your voice by several decibels, veins tremulous in your throat, and the woman interrupts, “All *right!* No need to *shout,* Ma’am!” So you apologize—you, who so rarely shout that the experience has left your vocal cords raw—and she interrupts, “Listen, Ma’am, you weren’t shouting. That was a *scream.* You were *screaming* in my ear!” So you naturally apologize again. You’ve begun to perspire—you, who so rarely perspire—and there’s that dull throbbing of a migraine coming on, like a leaf-blower just revving up in the near distance.

“Affiliation?” the woman asks, brusquely.

You draw a blank: “Affiliation?”

“Are you TriStar, or Mystery Writers, or what?”

“Well, I don’t know—”

“Don’t know your affiliation, Ma’am? What’s your affiliation?”

“Well, possibly—”

“*Speak up! I can’t hear you!*”

“Possibly Walter Mosley invited me? I can’t think who else would have invited me.”

“Who, Ma’am?”

“Walter Mosley—the author.”

“The *who?*”

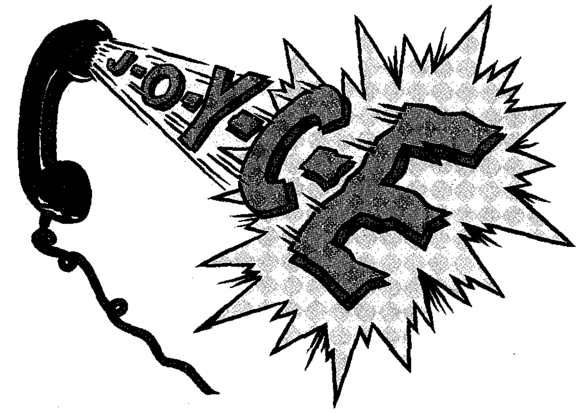
“The *author.*”

“What’s that name?”

“Wal-ter Mos-ley. You know, the—”

“ ‘*Wadder*’ what? How do you spell that?”

“*Walter Mosley,* the author of ‘Devil in a Blue Dress’? You must know his name?”



“Ma’am, I asked how do you spell that?”

“*W-a-l-t-e-*”

“Is that first name, last name, or what?”

“ ‘Walter’ is his first name. *W-a-l-t-e-r*—”

“Ma’am, I can’t hear you, it’s like you’re long distance. You’re gonna have to speak up.”

“*W-a-l-t-e-r M-o-s-*”

“No need to scream in my ear, Ma’am! Break my eardrum!”

“But you can’t seem to hear—”

“I can hear fine, Ma’am, without you screaming.”

“I’m sorry! I’ll try again. You asked for my affiliation, and I’m giving you the author’s name, Walter Mosley.”

“I said spell that, will you?”

“*WALTER MOSLEY*—he’s the author of the novel—”

“O.K., I’m putting you down for ‘Mystery Writers.’ ”

“Thank you.” A sharp click in your ear. The young woman has hung up.

A week later, on the eve of the screening, the phone rings. A man says, “Walter Moses, please.”

“Walter Moses? There’s no one here by that name,” you say.

“Which number is that there?” the man asks, annoyed.

“Which number are you calling?” you counter. The man pauses, as if rethinking his approach. “I’m calling to confirm your reservation for the screening of ‘Devil in a Blue Dress’ tomorrow night,” he says.

“Oh, well—yes,” you say, catching on, almost. “Except you’re not calling Walter Moses, you’re calling—” and you provide him with your three-pronged name, which, unexpectedly, he doesn’t ask you to spell.

You explain that you are coming to the screening, but that “Mr. Moses” won’t be accompanying you. And you can’t resist adding (oh, why can’t you leave well enough alone?), “But the name isn’t Walter Moses, in any case.”

“The who?”

“The author. *Author.*”

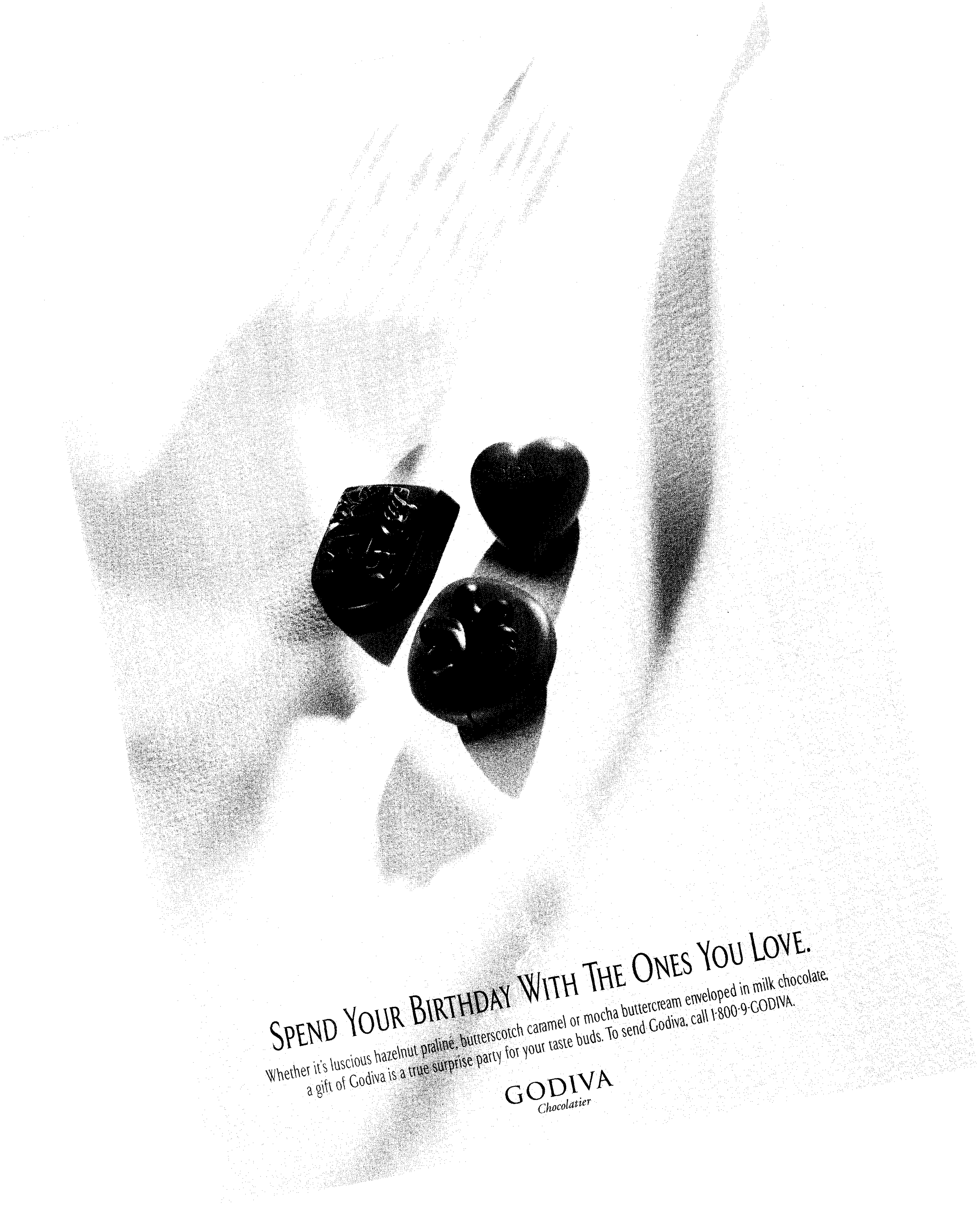
“Who’s that?”

“Walter Mosley.”

“That’s who?”

“The person who wrote the novel the film is based on, Walter Mosley.”

There’s a baffled pause. “What about him?” the man asks, and your mind has gone blank, as if a great thumb had pressed “ERASE,” or were moving even now to do so. ♦



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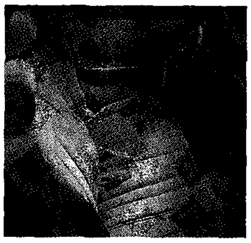

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